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THE
HISTORY
OF
GESTA ROMANORUM.

The ARGUMENT.

Man's soul is beloved of God her Father ; and yet she is tempted by the Devil by three means, at three several ages in this life. If she resist and overcome the same, she is adopted to the fruition of Heaven with Christ.

The First History.

Sometime there dwelt in Rome a mighty emperor which had a daughter, named Atalanta, whom diverse lords, and many noble knights desired to have to wife. This Atlanta was swift of foot ; wherefore a law was made, that no man should have her to wife, except he could take her by swiftness of feet. Many came to run with her, but could not overtake her. At last a Knight named Peomis said to her father, if it please you to give me your daughter to wife, I will run with her. Then said her father, there is a law made, that whosoever will have her to wife, must run with her : and if he overtake her not, he shall lose his head.

When the emperor told him the peril in the winning of her, the Knight provided him three balls of gold, and when they had begun to run, the young lady over run him ; then the Knight threw forth the first ball of gold, the damsel stooped and took it up, and in the mean while the Knight got before her, but when she perceived it, she ran so fast that she got before him again ; and then he threw the second ball of gold, and she stooping the Knight got before her a-

gain, which she seeing, ran so fast, that she soon had him at an advantage, and was before him again: now by that time they were nigh the mark, the knight threw forth the third ball, and while she was taking it up, the Knight got before her, and was first at the mark, and thus she was won.

The MORAL.

By this emperor is understood God, and by the damsel the soul of man, whom many devils deceive, but she withstandeth and overcometh them: and when he hath done his worst, he casts three balls of gold before her, in the three ages of man: In youth the ball of lechery, or the desire of the flesh; nevertheless, man overcometh the devil by repentance and amendment of life. The second is the ball of pride, which the devil casteth to man in his manhood, but this ball man oftentimes overcometh, as he did the first: but let him beware of the third ball, which is covetousness, that the devil casteth to man in his old age; for except a man may overcome this ball with the other two, he shall lose his honour, that is to say, the kingdom of heaven. For when a man burneth in covetousness, he thinketh not of spiritual riches, nor of prayers, nor of well doing, and thus loseth he his heritage: Unto the which our Lord Jesus bring us all.



The ARGUMENT.

As God allotteth divers men, divers callings in this world, so is every man try'd by the rule of life and doctrine, whether his practice agree with his profession, wherein if he hold himself content, for such a son the heavenly Father hath planted a tree of heavenly treasure in the life that shall be everlasting.

The second History

THERE reigned sometime in Rome an emperor named Anselm, who bare in his arms a shield

of silver with five red roses. This emperor had three sons: He had also continual war with the King of Egypt, in which war he lost all he had except a precious tree. It fortuned that he gave battle to the same King of Egypt, wherein he was grievously wounded, nevertheless he obtained the victory; wherefore while he lay at the point of death, he called unto him his eldest son, and said, my dear son, all my riches are spent, and nothing is left, but a precious tree standing in the midst of mine empire; I give to thee all that is under the earth and above the earth, of the same tree. Father, quoth he, I thank you much.

Then said the emperor, call to me my second son. When he came, the emperor said, My dear son, I have spent all my goods, except a tree which standeth in the midst of mine empire, of which tree I bequeath to thee all that is great and small. Then answered he, Father, I thank you much.

Then said the emperor, call to me my third son, and when he was come, the emperor said, my dear son, I must die of these wounds, and I have only a precious tree, of which I have given thy brethren their portion, and to thee I bequeath thy portion, thou shalt have of the said tree all that is wet and dry; then said his son, Father, I thank you.

Soon after the emperor died, and the eldest son took possession of the tree, the second son came to him, saying, my brother by what law occupy you this tree? quoth he, I occupy it by this title, my father gave me all that is under and above the earth, of the said tree, therefore the tree is mine. Quoth the second brother, he gave me all that is great and small of the said tree, and therefore I have as much right as you. The third son came to them and said, I have as much right in this tree, for he gave me of the said tree all that is wet and dry, therefore the tree is mine; but my counsel is that we be judged by reason; here beside dwelleth a

King full of reason, therefore let us go to him, and each of us lay his right before him, and let us stand to his judgement. Then they went unto the King of reason, and each of them severally shewed forth his right.

When the King had heard their titles he rehearsed them again severally. Then he returned unto the eldest brother, saying, if you list to abide the judgement of right, it behoveth you to be letten blood in the right arm. Then the King comanded him to be let blood. Then the King said unto them, my dear friends where is your father buried? They answered, my Lord in such a place; the King commanded to dig for the body and to take a bone out of his breast, and the King commanded that the bone should be laid in the blood of the eldest brother, till it had received kindly the blood, and then laid in the sun and dried, and after washt with clear water. But when they began to wash, the blood vanished away. Then the King said to the second son, It behoveth that thou be letten blood also; And he was done unto like as his brother was. And when they began to wash the bone, the blood vanished away. Then said the King to the third son, It behoveth thee to be letten blood likewise; when the younger brother was letten blood, and done unto as his brethren were, then the Kings servants began to wash the bone, but neither for washing nor rubbing might they do away the blood, but it ever appear'd bloody. When the King saw this, he said, that this blood is of the nature of the bone: thou art his true son, and these other two be bastards: I judge thee the tree.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth Christ, by these five roses, we understand his five wounds, and by this King of Egypt we understand the Devil, by whom he was slain for mankind. Nevertheless before his death he made his Testament to his three sons.

By the first, to whom he gave all under the earth and

above the earth, we understand the mighty men in this world, who seek to magnify themselves. By the second son, to whom he gave all of the tree that was great and small, we understand worldly wise men, which attempt to win or lose all. By the third son, to whom he gave all that was wet and dry of the tree, we understand every good christian prince, nobleman, magistrate or meaner person, which laboureth truly to do good unto all men; this tree is the tree of paradise, that is everlasting joy. This every man obtaineth not, therefore it behoveth them to go to the King of reason, that is unto God. By this bone we shall understand faith in Christ's merits, and good works, yet being washt with the water of swelling pride, malice, envy, then the faith in Christ's merits, and the sap of good works, vanisheth away. But the third son, be he magistrate or mean person, the bone of such a person is ever firm of faith. From such a man's bone the blood of lively fruits will never be washed away: but the more it is tryed the better it is. And therefore he that desireth to obtain the joys of heaven, must abide in the profession and practice of good life and manners, and he shall obtain the tree of paradise. Unto which he bring us, which liveth and reigneth for ever. Amen.



The ARGUMENT.

God so loved sinful man, that he sent his only begotten Son to redeem him out of the captivity of the world, to rest with him in the joys of heaven,

The Third History.

IN Rome there dwelt an emperor, named Dioclesian who loved charity, wherefore he desired to know what fowl lov'd th. ir young best, that he might thereby grow to more perfect charity. Once the emperor rode to a forest, where he found the nest of a

great bird called an ostrich, with her young, which young bird the emperor took and closed in a vessel of glass. The dam followed to the palace, and flew to the hall where her young one was. But when she saw that she could not get her out, she returned again to the forest, and abode there three days, and came again bearing in her mouth a worm called Thumare: and let the worm fall upon the glass, by virtue of which the glass brake, and the young one flew forth. When the emperor saw this, he praised much the dam, which laboured so to deliver her young one.

The MORAL.

This emperor is the Father of heaven, which greatly loveth them that live in love and charity. This little bird was Adam which was exiled out of paradise. This hearing the dam, that is Christ, he descended from heaven to the World, and lived three days, bearing with him a worm, that is his manhood, according to the Psalmist, I am a worm and no man. Of whose blood, the vessel eternal was broken, and the bird went out, that is, Adam went forth with the Son of God, and flew to heaven.



The ARGUMENT.

An undefiled soul is the daughter of God, so dear unto him, that he bestows her not upon the rich man, but upon the poor man that liveth in his fear; which if she transgress, then seeketh she for recovery by amendment of life; such a soul shall be espoused to Christ, and live with him everlastingly.

The fourth History.

THERE reigned in Rome a worthy emperor, which had a fair daughter; this emperor be-thought to whom he might give her in marriage, saying, if I give my daughter to a rich fool, then is she

lost : but if I give her to a poor wise man, then may he get his living by his wisdom.

There was in Rome a philosopher named Socrates, poor, but wise, which said to the emperor, ye have a daughter whom I desire above all things. The emperor said, my friend, I shall give thee my daughter on this condition, that if she die after she is espoused to thee, thou shalt lose thy head. Then said Socrates, upon this condition I take her : Socrates led home his wife, and they lived in peace a long time ; but at last she sickened to death. Then Socrates said, what shall I do, if the emperor's daughter should die ? And for sorrow he wept bitterly. While he wept, there came an aged man and asked him why he mourned ? he answered, I espoused the emperor's daughter, upon this condition, that if she died in my fellowship, I should lose my life, now is she sick to death almost, and therefore I mourn.

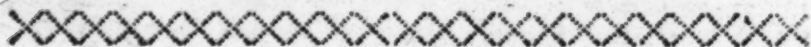
Then said the old man, in this forest be three herbs, if you make a drink of the first for your wife, and of the other two a plaister, and if ye use this in due time, she shall recover. And when his wife had used a while that medicinal drink and plaister, within a short time she was perfectly whole. And when the emperor heard that, he promoted him to great honour.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, the emperor is our Lord Jesus Christ, his daughter is the soul. This soul God would not give to a rich man, but to a poor.

This Socrates is a poor man : and why every man cometh poor and naked into this world ; and every man taketh his soul on such condition, that if she die in his fellowship, by sin, he shall lose his life. Therefore, O man, if thy soul sicken, do as Socrates did, go unto the forest, that is the church of Christ, and there the preachers shall minister unto thee three herbs, the first is acknowledging of sin, the second repentance, and the third is newness of life. If these herbs

be used, the sinner shall receive his health, and shall have everlasting life. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ.



The ARGUMENT.

Many foolish idiots of the world, who flow in worldly wealth, are by the preachers of God's word admonished of their momentary felicities, and in bestowing well their time here, to enjoy everlasting felicity in the world to come.

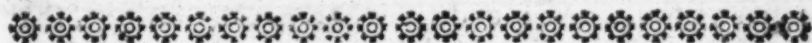
The fifth History.

SOMETIME there reigned in Rome a wise emperor, named Frederick, who had one only son: when he lay at the point of death, he called unto him his son, and said, Dear son, I have a ball of gold, which I charge thee after my death, to give to the veriest fool thou can find. After the death of his father, he sought many realms, and found many fools, at last he came to a realm where the law was, that every year a new king was chosen, and at the year's end he was exiled into an island where he finished his life in misery. At that time the new king was chosen, and was brought to his regal seat with much honour. And when the emperor's son saw that, he saluted him reverently, saying, lo, I give you this ball of gold; for my father charged me on his death bed, that I should give this ball to the greatest fool I could find. I have found many fools, but none more than you, for thou knowest, that at the year's end thou shalt be exiled, and die a miserable death, wherefore I hold thee for the greatest fool that ever I found, forasmuch as for the lordship of a year, thou wilt so wilfully lose thyself, and therefore I give thee this ball. Then said the king, thou sayest truly, and therefore I will send before me great treasure, wherewith I may sustain myself when I am put down; and so this was done, and

when he was exiled, he lived in peace and quietness, and died a good death.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor is the father of Heaven, the which bequeathed the ball, that is wordly riches, to those that favour what is earthly. This emperor's son is a preacher that travelleth about to shew men their peril. The realm wherein no king might reign but a year is the world; for whoso liveth an hundred years, when he dieth he shall seem only to have lived one year, therefore send before you your treasure, faith in Christ, and the fruits proceeding from the same; that when we be exiled out of this world, we shall obtain eternal life. Unto which bring us, he that for us shed his precious blood.



The A R G U M E N T.

The men of this world are hereby advertised of their greedy gripping after the temptations of the devil, till death cometh, and then they fall into the horrible pit due to their deserts.

The sixth History.

DIOCLESIAN reigned in the city of Rome, where dwelt a Philosopher, who set up an image which stretched out his arm and his finger with this posy written in Latin *percutite hic*, strike here. This image after the death of the Philosopher, stood a long time, and many read the superscription, but none understood it. At last came one from a far country, and read the superscription; and then when he saw the shadow of the hand, he broke up the ground under the hand, where the shadow was, and he found an house of marble below ground, wherein he found much riches, and many jewels, and at last he saw a table ready covered, and a carbuncle in the hall

that lighted all the house, and on the other side a man holding a bow in his hand, and an arrow ready to shoot. The man marvelled, and thought with himself, if that I tell this, there will no man believe me, and therefore I will take some somewhat in token thereof. And with that he saw a knife of gold upon the table, which he took, but then the archer smote the carbuncle, and brake it, whereby the whole house was made dark; and then he wept bitterly, for he knew no way to get out, and so he lost his life there in that darkness.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this image betokens the devil, which saith evermore, strike here, that is, seek after worldly riches. This man that digged betokens the worldly wise, that be ever smiting, so that they may get the vanities of the world; and they find great wonders, that is, they find therein the delights of this world: the Carbuncle is the youth of man, in which men take pleasure in worldly riches. The archer is death which smitteth the carbuncle; that is the youth, and power of man. Therefore study we to flee the world, and then shall we win everlasting life, unto which Christ bring us all. Amen.



The A R G U M E N T.

We are here put in mind, that as the devil besiegeth the world, our champion Christ Jesus is ready to take up our quarrel, who saving us from Satan, is yet accused for us as a transgressor, and suffered death for our justification.

The seventh History.

IN Rome dwelt an emperor Titus, who ordained, that what knight died in his empire, should be buried in his armour, and whosoever presumed to spoil any dead knight of his armour, should die. After

a few years, a city of the empire was besieged, and was in danger, for they could not defend themselves.

But at last there came to the city a young valiant knight, and the men of the city cried to him, We beseech thee to help us now, for you may see this city is like to be lost. Then he answered and said, Sirs, ye see I have no armour. A man of the city said to him, a valiant knight is buried within this city, and if it please you to take his armour, you may deliver us from peril.

The knight hearing this, went to the grave and arrayed himself with the armour, and delivered the city. Which done, he laid the armour again into the grave. But some men of the city envy'd him, and accused him to the judge, saying, a law was made, that whosoever despoiled any dead knight of his armour, should die. This knight took a dead knight's armour; therefore the judge made the knight to be taken. But the knight answered and said, it is written in the law, that of two harms the least is to be chosen. The city was in peril, and had I not taken this armour, I had neither saved you nor this city; therefore you ought rather to honour me than reprove me; he that stealeth and robbeth, purposeth not to restore the thing which he stealeth, but though I took the armour of the dead knight, for your defence, when I had obtained the victory, I bare it again to the same place, and put it on the dead knight, whose it is by the law.

Then said the justice, a thief that breaketh a house, altho' he bring again that he hath taken, I ask of thee if that the breaking of the house be lawful or not; The knight answered, when it was made in a feeble place, it would cause the master make his wall stronger, that the thieves after break not by force the walls so lightly.

Then said the judge, If the breaking of the house be good, nevertheless violence is done to the Lord of

the house; and so tho' thou didst restore the armour, nevertheless thou didst wrong in taking away of his armour. The knight said, I have told you that of two harms the least is to be chosen. For if an house were on fire, it were better that three or four houses thereby should be thrown to the ground, than all the city should be burned, so if the armour of the dead knight had not been taken, the city had been lost.

When the judge heard that he answered so well, he would give no judgment against him. But the accusers slew the knight wickedly; for whose death there was great weeping, and his body was honourably buried.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor is the Father of heaven, and this city is the world, which is besieged of the devil and sin, and the city was in peril. This young knight is our Lord Jesus Christ, who had not the armour of humanity, till he went to the grave, that is the womb of the virgin Mary, and thus in the womb of the virgin he took the armour of the dead knight, that is the manhood of Adam, and saved the world and mankind, by his cross, and put the armour again into the grave, when his blessed body was buried, but the citizens envied him, that is; the Jews accused him to Pilate, saying, If thou suffer him thus, thou art not Cæsar's friend, we have a law, and after that law he ought to die, John xix. 12. And thus our Lord Jesus Christ was condemned to the death of the cross, and after ascended up to heaven.

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The A R G U M E N T

The Fornication of wicked men is here detected, by the providence of God; the sinner is delivered out of the thraldom of sin, unto the liberty of life everlasting.

The eighth History.

THere reigned in Rome an emperor, named Bre-old, who ordained that a woman taken in adultery, her husband being alive, should be cast into perpetual prison. A knight's lady committed adultery, her husband being alive, and was with child, therefore she was put in prison, where she was delivered of a son. The child grew up till he was seven years old, and his mother daily wept bitterly; and the child said, mother, why weep ye thus? Then said his mother, O my son I have great cause to mourn and thou also, for above our heads are people walking, and the sun shineth in clearness, and we be here in such darkness, that I can neither see thee nor thou me; Then said the son, such joy I never saw, for I was born here, therefore if I had meat and drink enough, I would live here all my life, therefore mother be chearful. This lamentation the emperor's steward heard, wherefore he went to the emperor and besought him, that the mother and the son might be delivered out of prison. The emperor granted it, but said, if they trespassed in time to come, they should be punished with double pain. And after that she was delivered she lived joyfully.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor is God, that made this Law, that what soul espoused to the Lord, committeth adultery, that is, doth worship strange gods, should be cast into the prison of hell; her son that desired only meat and drink, are the wealthy, that say to the preachers, while we have the goods of this world, we desire no other heaven. The steward is the Lord Jesus, who besought the Father of heaven, that we might be delivered from the prison of sin, and so come to everlasting life, unto which he bring us all, Amen.

The ARGUMENT.

Christ proclaimeth the feast of heaven, whereunto the lame or preachers, having sight, or knowledge in God's word, are supported by the laity; and each comforting other thereunto, they approach unto the feast of perpetual felicity.

The ninth History

IN Rome dwelt a merciful emperor, named Pompey, who proclaimed a great feast, and that poor and rich should come to the feast, and should not only be well fed, but also have great gifts.

There were two poor men lying by the way, the one lame and the other blind. Alas, said they, how shall we do? for I am blind, and thou art lame; then said the lame man, I am lame and feeble, nevertheless I can see, but thou art blind and strong; take me upon thy back and bear me; and I shall direct thee the right way, and so they both came to the feast, and received great rewards; and after ended their lives in peace.

The MORAL.

Dear friends, this emperor is our Saviour, that proclaimed a feast, that is the joys of heaven, unto all mankind. This lame man betokeneth the ministers who live by the providence of God. And this blind man betokeneth the lay-men, who know not the right way to heaven. It behoveth the blind man, that is the lay-man, to sustain the ministers of the gospel, and the ministers are bound to teach us in the way to heaven. Unto which God bring us all, Amen.



The ARGUMENT.

Heaven and hell are here compared to two cities. To heaven a narrow, crooked, and painful way; having three enemies, the devil, the world and the flesh. To hell is

a fair way, broad, plain, and easy, having three guides ; that is, pride of life, covetousness of the eyes, and concupiscence of the flesh.

The tenth History.

Sometime in Rome dwelt a wise emperor, named Folliculus, who built a noble city, wherein he put all his treasure. Upon this city the way was stony, full of brambles and thorns ; and three knights fought with them that would come to that city. Therefore the emperor ordained, that whosoever overcame them should have his will of the treasure. After that, this emperor did make another city, wherein he ordained all manner of pain, sorrow, and tormenting, to which was a way very delectable, full of roses and fair lilies, and three knights ever waiting if any man came towards the city, to serve him with delicates and provision. But if any man entered, the people bound him hand and foot, and cast him into prison.

When this was cry'd through all the empire, there were two knights, Jonathas a wise man, and Pirrhus a fool ; Jonathas said to Pirrhus, the emperor hath made a city in the east, wherein he put his treasure, therefore let us go thither. Then said Pirrhus, thy counsel is good, let us go. The wise knight said, if it be so, I pray thee that friendship may continue between us ; and in token of love, thou shalt drink my blood, and I will drink thine, and neither of us leave other in his journey, wherefore they were both let blood, and each of them drank others blood. Then they went on their journey ; and came to the place where were the two ways, one sharp and stony, and full of thorns, the other fair and plain. Then said the wise knight, here are two ways, one sharp and thorny ; nevertheless if we go this way we shall come to the rich city. Then said the foolish knight, I will rather believe mine eyes than your words, I see that here is a hard way and full of thorns, and there be three cham-

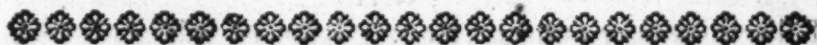
pions armed, to fight against all men that go that way, therefore I will go this other way, plain and easy to walk in, where there are three knights ready to give us all things delightful. Then said the wise knight, if we go by that way, we shall be led into the city of the north, wherein there is perpetual pain and sorrow, and where we shall be cast into prison. Said the foolish knight, that is the ready way, and as I believe more profitable than the other. Then went they the fair way, and three knights met with them and gave them all manner of things; and when they were within the city, the emperor's officers said, why came ye hither since ye knew the law of this city is so cruel? So they took the wise knight, and put him into prison, and took the foolish knight and bound him and cast him into a ditch. Soon after the judge came to the city, to give judgment on them that had trespassed the law, and among the prisoners were these two knights. Then said the wise knight to the judge, My reverend Lord, I complain of my fellow: for when we two came to the two ways, I told him all the peril of this, and the reward of that other city, but he said to me, I will believe mine own eyes better than thy words, and because he was my fellow I would not let him go alone; and therefore he is the cause of my death. Then said the foolish knight, No, he is the cause of my death; for he should not have followed my folly, for if he had forsaken this way, I should have followed him. Then said the judge to the wise knight, because that thou with all thy wisdom followedst the will of the fool, and thou fool because thou didst reject the counsel of the wise; ye shall be both hanged. Wherefore all men praised the judge for his judgment.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor is Almighty God, and in the east is the city of heaven, wherein is treasure infinite; and unto this city is the way of repentance, hard

and strait, according to the holy scriptures, It is a strait way that leadeth to everlasting life. In this way are three armed knights, that is the devil, the world, and the flesh, with whom it behoveth us to fight, before we may come to heaven : the second city that is in the North, is hell, to this city the way is plain and broad : the three knights that give to every man going this way what thing them pleaseth, are these, pride of life, covetousness and concupiscence; in which three the wretched man greatly delighteth, and at the last they lead him to hell : this wise knight is the soul, and the foolish knight is the flesh, which is always ready to do evil : these two drank others blood ; that is, they shall drink of one cup either of joy or pain.

The soul chooseth the way of repentance, but the flesh goeth on in the delights of this world. And thus the soul after death is cast into hell, and the flesh is cast into the ditch, that is, into the grave. But when Christ cometh to judge all mankind, then the soul shall complain upon the flesh, and the flesh upon the soul ; but then the judge shall condemn the soul, because she followed the frailty of the flesh, and the flesh because it would not believe the soul. Wherefore let us study to tame our flesh, that we may have eternal life. Unto which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.



The ARGUMENT.

The soul of man being possessed of paradise, was by the devil provoked to sin against her Creator, and lost that heritage ; but by Christ's death was restored unto a more happy heritage of everlasting felicity.

The eleventh History.

THere dwelt in Rome a mighty emperor Frederick, which had one only daughter, to whom he bequeathed his empire. An earl that dwelt there

came to her, and wooed her, and provoked her to sin all that he might; whereby in short time she inclin'd to the earl, and he lay with her, and defiled her; and after that he drave her from her empire, wherefore she fled into a realm there beside, where she daily mourned.

While she sat mourning by the high way side, there came riding by a fair knight, who courteously saluted her, asking her the cause why she mourned so sore? Then she said, My Lord, I am an emperor's daughter, my father is dead, who left me all his mighty empire. And after his decease an earl deflowered my virginity, and put me out of my heritage, so that now I beg my bread: and this is the cause of my sorrow. Then said the Knight, I have great compassion on thy beauty: therefore I will fight for thee against the Earl, if thou wouldest be my wife, and love no man so much as me. Then said she, that I will do gladly. Then said the knight, if I die in the fight and obtain the victory, thou shalt hang up my bloody shirt in thy chamber: And this for two causes. First, when thou beholdest the shirt, thou shalt weep for me. The second is, that whosoever comes to woo thee to be his wife, then run into thy chamber, and there beholding my shirt, think within thyself thus;

The lord of this shirt died for my love in battle, by which he recovered my heritage: God forbid that I should marry another man. Then said she, all this I shall fulfill. And then the knight fought and obtained the victory, and recovered again her heritage. Nevertheless the knight was deadly wounded and died, and bequeathed his bloody shirt unto her, desiring her to keep her promise. When she heard of his death, she wept sore, for in his shirt was wrought thus,

Think on Me, and have in mind,

Him that to thee was so kind.

She hanged it upon a beam in her chamber; and as oft as she beheld it, she wept bitterly. Not long

after, the nobles desired her to take an husband ; but when she beheld the bloody shirt she said, God forbid that I should take any other man but thee. And thus she answered every man that came to her ; and so they went away disappointed, and she ended her life in peace and rest.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this Emperor is God, and his daughter is the soul of man, to whom he gave the Empire of Paradise. But there came the earl, that is the Devil, and provoked her to sin. Wherefore we are exiled out of Paradise. But then came a knight, that is Christ, who overcame the Devil, and thus won our heritage : Therefore let us do as this young lady did, let us lay this bloody shirt, that is, the remembrance of the passion of Christ, on the beams of our hearts. And if the Devil would stir us to sin, let us think on the passion of Christ, saying thus, I will take none but thee, who hast shed thy blood for me. And thus shall we win everlasting life. Unto which bring us all the God of glory. Amen.



The A R G U M E N T.

We are here advertised to honour the sabbath-day ; how the redeeming of time is profitable to the soul and body. Also preachers of God's word for saying the truth get ill will. If we bestow our talents in the amplifying of faith, and furthering of good works, we shall inherit eternal life prepared for Christ's elect.

The twelfth History.

IN Rome there dwelt an emperor, named Apolinus, who ordained, that every man on pain of death, should celebrate the day of his nativity. This emperor called a man named Virgil, and said, there be many offences done contrary to this law ; therefore I

pray thee make some craft, whereby I may know who trespasseth it privily or openly. Then this Virgil made an image in the midst of the city, which told the emperor's messengers who trespassed against the law. There was a smith called Focus, which by no means would celebrate the nativity of the emperor. As the smith lay in his bed he thought upon the image, dreading lest it would accuse him, wherefore he went to the image, and said, if thou accuse me I will break thy head. The emperor on the morrow following, sent messengers to the image, to know who had trespassed against the law. And then said the image, lift up your eyes, behold my forehead. And they saw this posy written, Times be changed, and men become worse and worse: For he that will say the truth, shall have his head broken: the messengers went forth and told the emperor what they had read.

Then said the emperor, go to the image, and if you find any that hath threatned or hurt the image, bring him unto me. Then went the messengers and said to the image, tell us if any man hath threatened thee: then the image said, the smith Focus is the man. Straightway the messengers brought the smith before the emperor, and examined him why he kept not the day of the emperor's nativity, according to the law? then the smith said, I beseech you hear mine excuse, and if I answer not reasonably, I will yield me fully to your grace: then said the smith, I must have eight pence every day, and that I cannot get without great labour; and therefore I may not keep that day holy-day more than other days: then said the emperor, why must thou have this eight pence? Said the smith, I pay daily two pence, and two pence I lose, and two pence I lend, and two pence I spend, for I am bound to pay everyday two pence to my father, for when I was young he spent daily two pence on me; and two pence I lose on my wife, then said

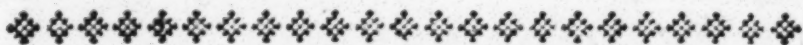
the emperor, why loſeſt thou that two pence on thy wife? Then ſaid he, where ſaw ye ever woman but either ſhe was wilful, and contrary to her huſband, or hot of complexion? And therefore that I give her I loſe. And two pence I lend to my ſon, that when I come to age he may pay me again. Alſo I ſpend two pence on myſelf in meat and drink, and that is little enough. Then ſaid the emperor, thou haſt answered wiſely. Not long after the emperor died, and then Focus was choſen emperor, becauſe he ſpent his eight pence ſo wiſely; and ended his life in peace and reſt.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor is our Saviour, which ordained that every man ſhould keep holy the ſabbath-day. This Virgil that made the image, is the Holy Ghoſt, who eſtabliſhed among us preachers to reprove poor and rich. But if a preacher ſhould ſpeak the truth, he ſhall be threatened by evil men. Wherefore the preachers may ſay now-a days, as the image, Times be changed, &c. Therefore it is needful they be armed; that is, with virtuous examples, and then they need not fear, becauſe they have the truth of God to ſtand by them.

By this ſmith Focus, is underſtood every good Chriſtian man, who daily ſhould ſpend his time in redeeming every hour with ſome profit corporal or ſpiritual; and then ought to be preſented before the heavenly emperor. Focus paid two pence to his father, and ſo we ſhould pay to our Father in heaven two pence; that is honour and love. For when we were in bondage God ſent down to the earth his ſon to redeem us. Alſo this Focus lent two pence to his ſon, that is, every Chriſtian ought to lend to the ſon of God, true and unfeigned faith, and good works, and he will repay us again at the day of doom, when ſoul and body ſhall be glorified. And that he is our brother, may be proved by that text, A child is born to us. This Focus

lost two pence on his wife, his wife betokeneth the flesh, upon whom thou lovest two pence, that is unlawful love and consent to sin. This Focus also spent two pence on himself; the first penny is repentance, the second penny is perseverance and amendment of life, for he that abideth unto the end shall be saved. And he that spendeth well these two pence, shall obtain everlasting life, Unto which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.



The ARGUMENT.

Man being blind through sin, and by infirmity trespassing with evil company, though God be favourable to him in his life-time, yet if he walk in his wickedness, his blindness shall not excuse him, but accuse him in the day of Judgment, to have offended God in abusing his mercy offered, and therefore the less worthy to have the reward of the simple soul, that with modesty liveth to the fruition of everlasting bliss.

The thirteenth History.

Sometime in Rome dwelt a noble emperor, which much loved mercy, wherefore he ordained that every blind man should have an hundred shillings per year. Certain men came to a tavern to drink wine, and after they had sitten three days, they were greatly in debt, wherefore the vintner demanded his money. Then said one of the drinkers, Sirs, the emperor hath made such a law that every blind man shall have an hundred shillings: therefore let us cast lots among us, and on whom the lot falleth, let his eyes be put out, and so may he get the hundred shillings to discharge us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon him that gave the counsel, and his fellows immediately put out his eyes.

So he went and asked an hundred shillings of the

steward. Said the steward, Thou didst see with both thy eyes a while since, thou understandest the law amiss: for the law is made for men that are blind thro' infirmity; but the other day thou hadst thy sight in the tavern and willfully lost it. Therefore gettest thou not a farthing. Then this wretched man told his fellows of the steward's answer, and with that the vintner despoiled them of their clothes, and beat them, and then drew them with shame out of the city, and so they were never after seen there.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor is our Saviour Christ, who ordained a law that every blind man should have an hundred shillings of his treasure. The blind man betokeneth every sinner, who sinneth thro' infirmity, yet shall receive an hundred shillings, if he repent of his sins, that is, he shall have an hundred times more joy, according to the scripture, Ye shall have an hundred times more joy if ye repent and turn from sin, and ye shall have everlasting life. These men that came to the tavern be sinners, who oftentimes come to the tavern of the devil, to drink of his carnal appetites; that is, they there waste away all spiritual virtues. And the devil spoileth them of all their good deeds that ever they wrought. They cast lots, that is, the custom of sin, and this lot falleth on such as are unthankful and mercilefs; and such a man willfully becometh blind, like Judas, that betrayed our Lord, without suggestion or inticing, when they come before the steward, that is before the prelates of the church, they can hardly obtain assurance of heaven because they leave not sin. Therefore let us study to please God, that we may obtain everlasting life: Unto which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

The ARGUMENT.

A certain vow of love being between every Christian and Jesus Christ, we are to consider the covenant of God toward the faithful, and to be careful to this covenant; and to study to perform our vow, so as we being undefiled, may get the promised place of glory, prepared for all them that seek the glory of God.

The Fourteenth History

IN Rome sometime dwelt a mighty Emperor, named Philominus, who had a fair daughter, by name Aglaes. There was also a knight that loved this lady. When he uttered his desire unto her, she said, seeing you have uttered the secrets of your heart, I will utter to you the secrets of my heart, and I will say above all others, I love you best. Then said the knight, I purpose to visit the holy land; and therefore give me your truth, that these seven years you shall take no other man, but tarry for me; and if I come not again by this day seven years, then take what man thou like best. And likewise, I promise you that within this seven years I will take no wife. Then he went to the holy land. Shortly after, the emperor treated with the king of Hungary for the marriage of his daughter. Then came the king of Hungary to the emperor's palace to see his daughter; and he liked her beauty and behaviour, so that all things were agreed touching the marriage. Then the emperor said, my daughter, I have provided for thee a king for thy husband, if thou list to consent and marry him. Then said she, one thing dear father, I intreat of you, and this is it, I have vowed to keep my virginity these seven years; therefore I beseech you name no man to me till they be expired, and then I shall take the king of Hungary to my husband. Then the emperor prayed the king of Hungary, to stay seven years for the love of his daughter, and then he would speed without fail.

Herewith the king was pleased to consent to stay the prefixed day. And when the seven years were ended, save a day, the young lady wept sore, saying, to-morrow my love promised to be with me again, and the king of Hungary to-morrow will be here to marry me, and if my love come not at a certain hour, then am I deceived of the love I bear to him.

When the day came the king hastened to the emperor royally arrayed in purple. And as he was riding, there came a knight, to whom he said, friend whence comest thou? the knight said, I am of Rome, and now am come from the holy land. And as they rode it began to rain so fast that the king was sore wet. Then said the knight, my lord, ye have done foolishly, since you have not brought with you your house. Then said the king, my house is large and broad, how should I bring it with me? thou speakest like a fool. Then rode they on till they came to a great water, and the king smote his horse and leapt in so that he was almost drowned. When the knight saw this, he said, ye did foolishly, because ye brought not with you your bridge. Then said the king, my bridge is made of lime and stone, and containeth in length more than half a mile, how should I then bring it with me? therefore thou speakest foolishly. When the king had ridden a little further, he asked the knight what time of day it was? Then said the knight, if any man hath list to eat, it is time of the day to eat: and therefore my lord, I pray take a Modicum with me. Then said the king, I will gladly eat with thee. And when dinner was done, the knight said to the king, my lord you have done foolishly, for that you brought not with you your father and mother. Then said the king, My father is dead, and my mother is old; to say the truth, a foolishher man than thou art, did I never hear. Then said the knight every work is praised at the end.

When the knight was nigh the palace, he asked

leave to go from him, for he knew a nearer way to the young lady, and he said to the king, this day seven years I left a net in a place, and now I purpose to visit it, and if it be whole, then will I keep it as a precious jewel: and if it be broken, then will I leave it. And he took leave of the king, and rode forth; but the king kept the high-way.

When the emperor heard of the king's coming, he went and royally received him. And when they sat at meat, the king said, by the way there came to me a knight, and saluted me; and anon there fell a great rain, and spoiled my apparel. And the knight said, you have done foolishly, for that you brought not with you your house: then said the emperor, what cloathing had the knight on? A cloak, said the king, then said the emperor, the house he spake of was his cloak, and therefore he said ye did foolishly, because ye came without your cloak. Then said he to me, ye did foolishly, for that you brought not with you your bridge. Said the emperor he speaketh truth, for he called the bridge your squire, that should have ridden before you: then said the king, we rode further and he prayed me to dine with him, and he said I did unwisely, because I brought not with me my father and mother: truly said the emperor, he saith the truth, for he called your father and mother, bread and wine, and other victuals. Then said the king, anon after he asked leave to go from me, and I asked whither he went? he said, this day seven years, I left a net in a private place, and now I will ride to see it, and if it be broken and torn, then will I leave it, but if it be as I left it, then shall it be unto me right precious. When the emperor heard this, he cried, my servants, come unto my daughter's chamber, for surely this is the net of which he spake. But they found her not; for the knight had taken her with him. And thus the emperor was deceived. And the king went home to his own country ashamed.

The MORAL.

Dear friends, this emperor is Christ, and his daughter is everlasting life. The knight is every good christian, which holdeth himself not worthy to come into the sight of God, unto such joy; he was seven years absent from his love, like as a good christian all his life should labour in fulfilling the seven works of mercy. By the king that came without a cloak, is to be understood some mighty men in this world, which have cloaks to cover all their other cloaths, but want the cloak of charity, wherefore they are wet with the rain of pride, avarice and lechery. This king also was almost drowned because he lacked his bridge, that is perfect faith, for without faith it is impossible to please God. Also this king had not brought with him his father and mother; by the father is understood humility, without which there is no virtue in any man. His mother be-tokeneth hope, therefore he that will obtain everlasting life, must have the cloak of charity, and the bridge of faith, and a father of meekness, and a mother of hope.

Also this knight went the narrow way, for he that will be saved, must go a strait way, that is, the way of charity and repentance. But many men go the other way, which leadeth to death, that is by the way of fleshly lusts. Therefore study we to walk in the narrow way, that thereby we may obtain everlasting life.



The ARGUMENT.

By the history is figured, the soul of every good Christian held of him as a daughter; but being seduced by Satan she is reduced by her champion Christ Jesus to her former habitation. Yet man forgetteth his duty, and for good rewardeth evil to his champion Christ Jesus, delivering him to be judged by the law as an offender; but when the champion avoucheth what he hath done, then

he is with shame constrained to remorse, and repent and amend his life, that by the death of his champion Christ, he may attain eternal life.

The Fifteenth History.

SOMETIME dwelt in Rome a noble emperor named Agies, who had with him a knight, named Gerrard, a worthy warrior, but as meek as a lamb, in the emperor's court. This emperor had a fair daughter, whom the earl of Pelester carried by force away, and defiled. Therefore the emperor said to his council, dear friends the violence done to me in deflouring my daughter, is not unknown to you, and therefore I purpose to give battle to the earl.

When the appointed day came, a sharp conflict was prosecuted, and almost all on the emperors part were slain; and as the emperor himself was forcibly assailed, the knight Gerrard put himself before the emperor and fought manfully, and so the emperor escaped, and the knight slew the earl; nevertheless he got divers wounds notwithstanding he followed on the chase, till he came to the place where the emperor's daughter was, and led her with him. For which he was praised of all the people. Not long after this knight had a suit in the emperor's court.

When the emperor had heard him, he called to him a judge, and said, Sir, our will is, that you do all equity unto this knight. And when the knight heard this, he cried, Alas, alas! who ever heard of such an emperor? in battle, I in my own person, put myself in jeopardy for thee, and saved thee; and now thou hast assigned another man to be judge in my cause; and with that he put off his clothes, and shewed his wounds, and said, Lo, what have I suffered for thee, O emperor, I put no other man in my stead, and now thou assignest another man in my cause.

When the emperor heard this, he said, dear friend, thou saved me from death, thou didst re-obtain my

daughter; and for my sake suffered many wounds, verily it is right, that I in person make an end of thy cause, to thy content, and to mine honour. And then the emperor laboured very busily, and made thereof an end, according to the knight's request; wherefore all men greatly commended the emperor.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor is every Christian man, which had a fair daughter; that is the soul. This earl is the devil, which carrieth away and desflowereth by sin, the soul of man; wherefore mankind was in thralldom, till a valiant knight came and put himself on the cross to suffer death; and this knight reduced and re-obtained the soul of man unto the church, wherefore he suffered many great wounds in his body. And now this knight, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, hath a matter to do among us, that is to find in us perfect faith; wherefore he calleth on us daily, that we would be ready at all times. But many men do as the emperor did, which appointed the knight another judge. Therefore against unthankful persons it shall be said thus; Lo, he suffered for us on the cross, and shewed to us all his wounds. Be we therefore thankful for his graces, and be content to suffer for his love some sorrowful repentance. For he that suffereth pain for the love of God in this life, shall receive an hundred times more in the life everlasting. Unto the which our Lord Jesus Christ bring all mankind, Amen.



The A R G U M E N T.

The soul of man is here warned to eschew the crafts of the devil, that she yield not to his allurements, lest he bereave her of her joys in the life to come.

The sixteenth History.

THERE dwelt sometimes in Rome a wise emperor named Pompey, which had a daughter nam-

ed Aglas, who had many endowments above other women. First she was fair; also she was swift in running, so that no man might overtake her. It was proclaimed that what man, poor or rich, would run with his daughter should have her to wife, if he could over-run her; but if she over-run him, his head should be smitten off.

When the states of that empire heard this proclamation, one after another, ran with her, but she outran them all; wherefore they lost their heads. A poor man dwelling at Rome, said to himself, I am poor and of poor kindred; now if I might over-run her, I should be promoted to great honour, and also all my kindred. Then he provided himself of three things, First, a garland of red roses and white. Secondly, a rich girdle of silk. Thirdly, a purse of silk embroidered with precious stones, and within the purse was a ball with this posie, Who playeth with me shall not be weary of my play: then put he these three things in his bosom, and went to the palace, saying, Come forth fair lady, for I am ready to run with you.

This young lady when she saw him, despised him and said, I have overcome many worthy knights, and now must I run with a churl? Nevertheless I will fulfil my father's commandment. And at last they ran together, and within short space the damsel got far before him. When the juggler saw this he threw forth his garland before her, when she saw it she took it up and set it upon her head, and mean while the juggler went before her. When the damsel saw this for sorrow she threw it into a ditch, and ran and over-took him, and gave him a buffet, saying, abide thou wretch, it becometh not thy father's son to have me to wife. And this lady did over-run him a great space. When the juggler saw this, he took the girdle and threw it before her. And when she saw that, she stooped down, and girded her therewith, and the

juggler got before her again. Now when she saw that, she took the girdle, and with her teeth tare it in three pieces, and then threw it from her; and then she ran fast, and overtook him, and gave him a great blow, saying, O wretch thinkest thou to overcome me? and with that she ran before him again: the juggler kept the purse till they were near the mark, and then threw it before her, and anon she took it up, and opened it and took out the ball, and read the posie, Who playeth with me shall ne'er be weary of my play, and she began to play, and continued till the juggler was at the mark. And thus he won the emperor's daughter.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor is our Saviour, and his daughter is the soul of man, which was swift in running: that is in virtue, while clean, so that no deadly sin might overcome her: this juggler is the devil; he provided him of three things: First, of the garland, which betokeneth pride, for a garland of flowers is set upon the head that it may be seen; so pride must be seen. Do thou therefore as the maiden did, be angry at thy sins, and cast off thy garland of pride into the ditch of repentance, and so shalt thou give the devil a buffet, and overcome him. But when the devil seeth himself overcome, then he tempteth a man to another sin, and casteth before him the girdle of lechery. And alas! there be many girded with this girdle of lechery: then casteth the devil, the purse with the ball: this betokens the heart, which evermore should be close against earthly things, and open above to heavenly joy; and the two strings betoken the love of God, and of our neighbour; the ball betokeneth covetousness, and therefore the posie was true, whoso playeth with me, that is with covetousness, shall ne'er be satisfied: therefore let us take heed that we play not with this ball, and then we shall obtain the bless of heaven that shall never end. Unto which he bring us that shed his precious blood for us.

The ARGUMENT.

Preaching and prayer is melody in the ears of God, and hath a promised reward, yet by our adversary the devil, we are hindered for a time, until godly preachers be sent for, which with the hook of God's word, do win again our lost felicity, and so recover the fall of such as were seduced, into the joyful fellowship of the angels of heaven.

The Seventeenth History.

THere dwelt in Rome a wise emperor, named Theodosius, which loved the harp, and likewise the hunting. As he hunted in a forest, he heard a harp and was almost ravished; wherefore he sought to find that melody, and at last he espied a man sitting beside the water, playing on a harp full sweetly. Then said the emperor, friend, proceedeth this melody from thy harp, or no? the poor man said, my lord, beside this water, my wife, my child and I have dwelt this thirty years, and God hath given me such a gift, that when I play on my harp the fishes of this water come to my hand, so that we have been sustained in great plenty: But, alas, sometimes on the other side cometh a whistler, and he whistleth so sweetly, that the fishes forsake me, and go to him; therefore my lord I crave help against this whistler: then said the emperor, I have a golden hook, which I will give thee, bind it fast to the end of a rod, and put on a worm, then cast thy rod into the water and play upon the harp, and when thou perceivest the fish take the bait, draw them to the land, and then his whistling will not avail. And when this poor man began to play, the fishes came to the bait, and then he took them up and lived in good estate long time, and at last ended his life in peace and rest.

The MORAL.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth Christ, which

delighteth to hunt the soul of mankind in the forest; that is, the church; he loveth also the harp, that is them that teach the word of God. This poor man betokeneth the preachers of the word, which ought always to be resident to their charge, and ought to have the harp of holy scripture, wherewith to draw sinners out of this world. But now the preachers may say, alas, for when I preach the devil whistleth so sweetly, that the sinners draw to him, and turn themselves to the delight of sin. The devil also deceiveth mankind by diverse ways.

First, in the time of the preaching, he maketh some to sleep, and some to talk and clatter, and some he maketh them so dull that they cannot understand what the preacher saith. Behold how many ways the devil deceiveth mankind, and hindereth the work of God: therefore every preacher ought to have the golden hook of God's word against this whistling, by which they may draw sinners to heaven. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



The ARGUMENT.

Man's soul, the daughter of our Saviour, is dear to him; and though he be careful for her, yet she is seduced by the flesh, but by earnest repentance, and amendment of life, is brought unto dutiful obedience, that thenceforward so continuing, they together may be partakers of everlasting blessedness.

The eighteenth History.

THERE dwelt in Rome a mighty emperor named Ptolomeus, which had a daughter, whom he loved so that she was guarded with five armed knights, and over these knights he ordained a controller, also a steward to guide his household. And then he resolved to visit the holy land. And when he was ready for his journey, he said to his steward, I commit my daughter

to thy keeping, and I charge thee that she lack nothing. Moreover, I leave to thy keeping the five knights; see that they want nothing fitting for them. Also my gray hound, commanding that thou feed him as hitherto he hath been; and if thou fulfil all this, thou shalt receive a great reward. Anon, the emperor took his journey, and the steward a long time kept well the emperor's command.

But at the last he spied this young lady walking alone in an orchard: wherefore against her will he deflowered her. And when he had done so, he drave her out of the palace. So the damsel went from door to door, and begged her bread. When the knights saw this they reproved him. But he spoiled them and drove them from the palace.

Not long after, there came tidings that the emperor was coming home. And when the steward heard this he said, It cannot be but I shall be accused for my trespasses, therefore better it were that I go and accuse myself unto him, and ask him mercy, than that any other should accuse me. Then he put off all his cloaths, save his hose and shirt, and took three ropes with him, and barefoot went to the emperor. When the emperor espy'd him coming, he wondered greatly. And when the steward was come near he fell on his knees. Then said the emperor, why meetest thou me after such a sort? Oh, my lord, quoth he, there is a heavy chance befallen me. Then said the emperor, what chance hath befallen thee? and why bearest thou these three ropes? Then answered the steward, This first rope I bring to bind my hands and feet, till the blood burst out, for that I have deserved. The second rope I bring with me to draw me at a horse tail till my bones be bare without flesh, for that is justly due to me. The third rope I have brought to hang me upon a gallows, till the birds feed on my flesh, for these things are due to such breakers of the law as I

am. Yet, Oh! my lord, have mercy on me, for I dare not acknowledge my trespass until I have obtained your pardon. Then said the emperor, I see in thee great contrition; therefore tell me thy trespass, and thou shalt find mercy. Alas, said the steward, I have defiled thine only daughter, and have driven her out of the palace, so that she beggeth her bread, I have also despoiled the knights, and now some of them are become thieves and robbers, and some men-killers: and the controller of the knights I have slain; but I fed thy gray hound with the best meat, and ty'd him with a chain, yet at the last he brake it, and now he runneth about the country.

When the emperor heard this, he said hast thou deflowered my daughter, despoiled my knights, and slain their controller, and the gray hound is he gone also? Surely had I not forgiven thee, I would have put thee to the vilest death: notwithstanding go and bring again my daughter, that thou mayest marry her. Also bring again my knights, and restore to them their goods as before. Also seek diligently for my gray hound till thou find him, and then make him fast: then the steward bowed down and thanked the emperor for his great mercy. And then he sought till he found the emperor's daughter, and the knights, and the gray hound, and brought him home again. And after he had married the young lady, and restored again the knights goods, he ended his life in peace.

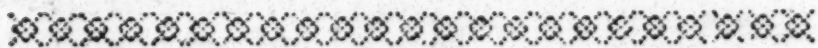
The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, the daughter is man's soul: the five knights are the five senses, armed for the preservation of the soul: the controller of the knights is reason, which ought to rule the senses; the gray hound is the flesh of man, and the steward is every man to whom God hath given life and soul. But man often polluteth his soul with sin, and then she wandreth from

door to door, that is from sin to sin. He despoileth the five knights, that is the five senses, taking away the light from their eyes, moving their ears to listen to backbiting, &c. The master is slain whensoever man is ruled by will and not by reason; the flesh is bound with a chain of reason, but breaking out doth much harm.

The coming again of this emperor betokeneth the coming of Christ at the day of judgment; wherefore let us arouse ourselves of our sins first, put we off all our cloaths betimes, that is our sinful life, and take we three ropes in our hands; the first rope betokeneth true repentance, which ought to bind our hearts within us, that blood burst out on every side; that is, that sin might void itself; the second rope, is acknowledging of our sins, which would draw us till the flesh be fallen from the bones, that is, till lust be turned away by the stones of repentance. The third rope is amendment of life.

Like as he brought again the emperor's daughter, so it behoveth us to find and bring our soul, to the church, to rule well our senses, to feed our flesh as we should, and so fall not again unto sin, for fear that it fortune to us worse. And if we fulfil this, we shall obtain everlasting life. To which our Lord bring us, Amen.



The ARGUMENT.

The violating of our Innocency is here described, which being adjudged after the law is death: but by the merits of Christ we obtain salvation.

The Nineteenth History.

IN Rome a mighty emperor called Ensenue, ordained a law, that whosoever ravished a virgin, should be at her discretion, whether she would put him to

death, or would take him to her husband. It befel that a man ravished two fair maidens; the first desired that he should die, but the second desired him to be her husband. The ravisher was led before the judge, that he might satisfy both these damsels. The first damsel desired his death. Then said the second, I desire to have him to my husband; and as thou hast the law for thee, so I have it for me, and my petition is better than yours, for it is more charitable; therefore the judge heard the mercy of the second damsel, he gave judgment that he should take her to wife, and so it was done. The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth Jesus Christ. The ravisher is every sinner which ravisheth God's mercy, as often as he violateth his commands by sins. The ravisher also is called before the justice, and the first damsel (innocency) said against the sinner, that he ought to die everlastingly, but the other, that is Christ's merits, alledgeth how the mercy of God ought to help by repentance, which is the high way to everlasting life, unto which God bring us all, Amen.



The A R G U M E N T.

The mother of a child of grace and of a reprobate, is here declared, and set forth; but which of them shall be saved, and which of them shall be damned is not yet revealed to the world, until the last and dreadful day of judgment.

The twentieth History.

Sometime there dwelt in Rome, a mighty emperor, named Lybodus, which took to wife the daughter of the king of Assyria, who bear him a son and in the birth she died, after her disease the emperor married another wife, and had by her a son also: and sent them both into a strange land, to be brought up. When they had been there a long time, the empress

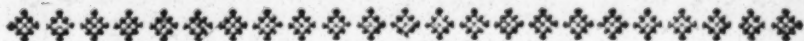
said, my lord, ten years be now expired since I bear my son, and yet I never saw him but once, therefore I beseech you to send for him, that I may rejoice me in his sight: then said the emperor, I have a child by my first wife, and I must send for them both: and when they were come, they were so like in all things, that hardly the one might be known by the other; but the father knew the difference.

Then said the empress, I pray you tell me which is my son? Then the emperor called to him the son of his first wife, and the empress gave all care to cherish him, and neglected the other: then the emperor said I have deceived thee: for the other is thy son. Then set she all her care upon the second. When the emperor saw this, he said truly I deceived thee; this is not thy son, but one of them two is thy son: then said the mother, I entreat you, tell me which is my son? The emperor said, I will not tell you, till they come to man's estate, and this is my reason, first I told you that this was your son, and then you forsook the other, and when I told you that the other was your son, then you slightly regarded the first; therefore cherish them both alike, that I may have like joy of them. And when they were both come to age, the emperor made a great feast, and told his wife which was her son. Then rejoiced she greatly, and when she had lived a good time, ended her life in peace and rest.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor's sons betokeneth those that be chosen to everlasting life, and those that be not chosen. The mother of them is the providence of God, that nourisheth them both: therefore our Lord will not let the world know which be chosen, for if she knew that, then would she love the one and hate the other; but the day of judgment will tell which shall be saved and which shall be damned: there-

fore pray we in this world, that we may come to the everlasting feast in heaven unto the which God bring us all.



The ARGUMENT.

The ungodly will not live virtuously, and yet oftentimes they are enriched; but they are not careful of the reward of heaven, nor fear the torments of hell.

The Twenty-first History.

Sometime there dwelt in Rome a noble emperor, named Polinus, which had three sons. When he lay upon his bed, he bethought him to which of them he might give his empire. Then he said to his three sons, which of you is most slothful, he shall have mine empire. The first son said, I am so slothful, that if my foot were in the fire, I had rather it should be burnt, then to take it out. Then said the second, though there were a cord about my neck, to hang me, and if I had a sword, for very sloth I would not cut the cord to save my life. Then the third spake, I lay upright in my bed, and there dropped water into mine eyes, and for very sloth I would not move my head to the right nor to the left, to save myself. When the emperor heard this, he bequeathed the empire unto the youngest, as being the slothfullest.

The MORAL.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth the devil. By the first son is understood a man that chanceth into evil company, and had rather be burnt in the fire of sin, then depart from them. The second son betokeneth him, that knoweth himself to be bound with sin, and is so slothful, that he will not cut it with the sword of repentance. By the third son is understood a man that hears of heaven, and hell, yet will he not move himself to the right nor to the left, to forsake his sins:

such a man shall receive the torments of hell : from which keep us our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.



The ARGUMENT.

Man's soul, as a captain general, with his forces fighteth against the world, wherein is the castle of vanity and the poisoned forces of sin, against whom well-to fight, is the means to obtain the victory, and triumph everlastingly.

The Twenty-second History.

Alexander the emperor besieged a city of Egypt with a great army, but lost many men, without hurt or stroke, whereat he greatly wondered, and called his wise men, and asked the cause why his soldiers died thus without visible wounds? They answered, upon the walls is a cockatrice; and your men are infected with the deadly venom of her eyes, and so die. But if, my lord, you will set up a large mirror over-against the cockatrice, when she seeth herself therein her venom shall return again to herself, and she shall die, and your men be saved. The emperor did so, and thus was the cockatrice slain, and the emperor assaulted the city, and obtained the victory.

The MORAL.

Dear friends, this emperor may be called every christian, which ought to gather an host of virtues : the city is the world, wherein is the castle of vanities. In this standeth a cockatrice, that is, pride and lust, by which many die everlastingly. Let us then set up the mirror of a pure conscience, that we may see our sins, and so shall destroy the cockatrice, and obtain victory over sin, and get everlasting life, to which he bring us all, Amen.

The ARGUMENT

The soul being conversant with the flesh, she seeketh to overthrow the soul with her unclean lusts; where though the soul for a time suffer, yet the lion of the tribe of Judah is of power to revenge her injury, and to make her to repofsess her former estate in the world to come.

The Twenty-third History.

A Mighty emperor sometime ruled the Romans, named Archelaus, who in his old age espoused a lady, whom a knight loved, and had to do with her. This emperor bethought him to visit Jerusalem, wherefore he took leave of his emprefs, and went towards the said city.

When the emprefs heard this, she took the ship-master aside, and said, My lord goeth with you in your ship, therefore cast him over-board, that he may be drowned, and thou shalt have what thou wilt for a reward. Then the ship master swore by their great god Jupiter, After he cometh within my ship, you shall never see him more. Then the lady gave him as much gold as he would have, and he went to his ship.

Then the emperor took shipping: and when he was in the midst of the sea, the ship master threw the emperor over board into the sea, and returned and told the emprefs, whereof she was right glad.

The emperor had learned in his youth to swim, and swam to an island, and when he was faint, he prayed to God to be his help. In the island was nothing but lions and leopards. When the emperor had got to land, he espied a young lion fighting with an old leopard, and the lion was almost overcome. Now the Emperor drew his sword, and slew the leopard. The lion from that time followed the emperor, and would not leave him, but every day brought his prey and laid it at his feet, and he smote fire on a flint stone, and dressed it, and thus was he fed. At length he saw

a ship sailing by, and cried to them. And when they heard the voice, they sailed to him, and took him into their ship; and the lion followed him, swimming in the sea after the ship; and the ship men had pity on him, and took him into the ship. Now when the emperor came to land, he went forth with the lion till he came near his own palace, where he heard trumpets and all other music; and there came a squire towards him that he knew, but the squire knew not him, to whom the emperor said thus, Tell me what is the cause of this melody? The squire answered and said, The empress is married this day, and therefore they make such melody. Then said the emperor, where is her husband that was emperor before? The squire said, he went to the holy land, and was drowned by the way. Then the emperor said, I pray you tell the empress that I will shew them rare sport with my lion. The squire went in and told his lord and his lady, a goodly old man was at the gate, that would shew them sport with his lion: then said the new married lady, bring him in. When the emperor with his lion was brought in, the lion ran upon the young knight that was newly married, and slew him: and he ran upon the empress also, and devoured her to the bones, before all the lords, who were greatly aghast, and began to flee. But the emperor said, Lo, this is the vengeance of God, because my wife hath used adultery with this knight, and she practised my death with the master of the ship, and thereupon he threw me into the sea, but God saved me. And because I helped once this lion, he never forsook me since; and now, as ye all see, he hath slain both the adulterers, and therefore understand ye, that I am your emperor. Now when they heard this, they discerned him to be their emperor, and praised God, who had saved their lord. And they lived together a long time in peace.

The MORAL.

Dear friends, by this emperor we may understand every christian man, that proposeth to visit the city of Jerusalem; *i. e.* To get everlasting life thro' faith. But his wife, that is the flesh, murmureth against the soul, and loveth an adulterer, that is, deadly sin: this emperor went into a ship, that is, he went to the church of God: but the wife, that is, fleshly men, accused him to the shipmaster, that is, to the prelates of the church, whereby many be cast out of the church into the sea of this world. But let him learn to swim; that is, let him put all his hope in God, and by his grace he shall come to an island; that is, the religion of the heart: and he that is in this region, shall find a lion, which is the Lord Jesus Christ, who fighteth ever against the devil; and if a man hath helped this lion, that is, hath served God against his enemies, he may trust that he will not forsake him. By this lion you must tame thy wife, that is, thy flesh; and then without doubt, thou shalt obtain the empire of heaven. Unto the which bring us, Lord Jesus. Amen.



The ARGUMENT.

The soul of man espoused to Christ in baptism, yet dieth by means of sin, leaving behind her a son, called Reason, which searched the disease of her father: and being sent for to cure the malady of his stepmother's will, he refuseth to administer comfort unto her.

The Twenty-fourth History.

THERE dwelt in Rome an emperor, named Gregory. His lady bare a son, and when he was ten years old, his mother died. Not long after, the emperor married another wife, who hated this son.—Then the emperor, willing to please his wife, banished his son. The son went and studied physick so that

in a short time he was a skilful physician. Not long after, the emperor his father lay at death's door : wherefore then he sent to his son, praying him, that he would come to him. The son, willing to obey his father, came to him ; and when he had felt his pulse, he administered physick to him, whereby he recovered.

Not long after, the empress his step-mother fell sick ; and the emperor sent to his son to help her of her sickness. Then said he, Father, I will not : then the emperor waxed wroth, and said, If thou wilt not obey me, depart mine empire. His son answered, If you do so, you do unrightly ; for you exiled me thro' her suggestion, and mine absence was the cause of your sickness, now my presence is the cause of her sickness, and therefore I will not meddle with her, for if she should die, men would say my physick had been the cause : then said the emperor, she hath the same sickness that I had. His son answered, nevertheless you are not both of one constitution : for whatsoever I did to you, you were content, and when you saw me you rejoiced at my coming ; but when she saw me she was angry, and therefore if I should speak to her, her sorrow would increase ; and if I should touch her, she would be in a rage. And when he had spoken his mind, he took leave, and departed thence.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth every Christian, which is married to Christ in baptism, for then the soul is made the spouse of Christ, on whom he begetteth a son, that is, the knowledge of his word and will. But when the child grew to some increase in virtue, his mother christianity died, then the Christian man matched with another woman, the stepmother of the said youth, named Ignorant Envy, who caused him to be banished : the good Christian, overruled by his wife, falleth sick, and sendeth for his son, that is, knowledge of God's word and will, to

cure them who dutifully obey. But she falling sick at the sight of the emperor's son, tho' her husband entreats to him to cure her as a good physician of her soul; yet she not liking his endeavour, oftentimes dieth in her ignorant envy, without hope of health, so that the physician came hither to late.



The ARGUMENT.

Jesus Christ ought to be cherished in our hearts by faith, which is taken from us when we are not thankful unto him for our graces. Wherefore the preachers of God's word, as physicians, are sent to admonish us to persevere and hope in Christ's merits; and so to harbour him in our hearts, as he may thereby bestow on us the promotion of heavenly bliss.

The twenty-fifth History

SOMETIME there dwelt in Rome, a mighty emperor, named Folenus, who took to wife the king's daughter of Germany, who bare him a son. Then the states of the empire came, and every one of them besought the emperor to have the bringing up of his son: the emperor said, to morrow shall be a tourney, and which of you obtaineth the victory, shall have the keeping of my son. So on the morrow, the nobles and states justed valiantly; but at length a knight named Josias obtained the victory. And immediately after he took the child home. And he sent before to his castle, and commanded his officers that they should royally provide for him, and that the child's lodging should be in the midst of the castle; and also that the seven sciences should be pourtrayed about his bed. The knight had a well by the child's bed wherein he bath'd himself, and there was a window whereat the sun might shine on him. One day they left open the window, and a bear came and seeing the win-

dow open, went to the well and bathed him therein; of whose bathing the well favoured after, whereby whosoever drank of that water waxed leprous. So it fortun'd the lord and the lady, by drinking of that water became lepers. Not long after, there came a great eagle in at that window, and bare the child away out of the cradle. And the lord of the castle said, Wo is me, what shall I do? now I am the son of death, for I am a leper, and so is my wife, and household: also the emperor's son is lost and gone.

But there came to him a physician, and said, Sir, if you will do after my counsel, you shall not repent it. First, you, your wife and household must be let blood, and then bathed, and I will apply my medicine; and when you are whole, then shall you walk up to the mountains, and seek the emperor's son, for the eagle hath let him fall there. Then the lord and all the household were let blood, and received the medicine, and became whole and sound: then he took his horse, and rode forth, and found the child, whole and sound, lying in a valley, whereat he rejoiced. And he led the child home to his father; who promoted him to great honour. And so after that he ended his life in peace and rest.

The MORAL.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth the Father of heaven: to nourish whose son many men desire, when they receive the sacrament: the knight betokeneth a good christian, that abstaineth from evil, and laboureth to do good: therefore as the knight did, let us send messengers to make clean the castle of our hearts by faith, and so shall this child rest in our hearts.

The well betokeneth mercy; for whosoever is without mercy, cannot nourish the blessed child, but it happeneth that the knights wife, that is, the flesh, beareth the key of mercy, and leaveth that well o-

pen, and then cometh the bear, that is, the devil, and leaveth his lothsome filth in the well, and who-so tasteth thereof, shall be infected with the leprosy of sin. The window is the grace of the Holy Ghost, in at which the eagle cometh, that is, the affections of the world, carrying us away unto the vale of ignorance. Then what shall we do but send for a physician, that is a minister of the word of God, which shall bid him let blood, that is, acknowledge his sin, and reconcile himself by earnest repentance to God.

Then must he bathe himself with tears of contrition. and then take the medicine of amendment of life; and then he must ride forth, without doubt he shall find the Child Jesus in the valley of humility. And if ye do this, ye shall nourish that blessed Child, for which the father of heaven shall promote you into everlasting joy. Unto the which joy he'll bring us, that shed his precious blood for us. Amen.



The ARGUMENT.

Christ hath proclaimed alike joy and bliss in heaven to poor as to rich; but the rich coveting all, lose the prerogative which the poor in heart enjoy: Yet as he is a righteous God, he ordaineth for both in such sort, that if they will, they may be satisfied with his graces.

The Twenty-sixth History.

Sometime dwelt in Rome a mighty emperor, who was named Fulgentius, who made a proclamation, that whosoever would come to him, rich or poor, at a certain day, should have their petition.—Then the mighty men put forth their petitions, and they were granted, insomuch that great riches was distributed among them.—Straightway after, the poor men gathered together, and said, The rich men have been there lately, and obtained their petitions: therefore will we

go now, and try if we may obtain any good. So they went to the emperor's palace, and there they put forth their petitions according to the proclamation.—Then the emperor said to them, It is true that my proclamation was, that every man should have their petitions: but the rich and mighty have been here before you, to whom I have given all, save only the royalty of my lordship. The poor men replied, Gracious sovereign, let us not go away empty, for we know it is our own fault that we came not with these other rich men: Then said the emperor, Good friends, tho' I have given my land and riches to the rich men, nevertheless, I have kept in mine own hands the dominion over them, and that do I give to you, and so they shall be your servants. Then the poor men rejoiced, thanked him, and took their leave, and went home again.

But when the rich and mighty men heard that, they were greatly moved, and said, Alas, alas! they that sometime were but our subjects, are now made lords over us. Therefore they went to the emperor, and prayed him for redress.

Then said the emperor, my good friends, I do you no wrong, you had your petitions, you asked lands and honours, and those I have granted you, in so much that I kept nothing for myself. Now I had nothing to give to the poor men, but the sovereignty over you, which I kept in my hands; And I gave them that authority, so do not blame me; But if you will follow mine advice, I shall give you good counsel.

You have received lands and tenements, and honours and preferments, which by my counsel, you shall give the poor men, that they may grant unto you the sovereignty, and that dominion which they have. When the mighty men heard this they gave their goods among the poor men, and they gave them again the authority over them. And thus were they both con-

tented, and the emperor was greatly commended of both parties.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, by this emperor is understood Christ, which made a proclamation, that every man should come and ask everlasting joy. But the rich ask but for worldly honour and riches; wherefore he gave them so much of worldly wealth that he had nothing to himself: the poor men be the meek in heart, who have sovereignty in heaven, above the men of the world; therefore these rich men ought to impart their temporal riches unto the poor men. And thus ye may attain unto the kingdom of heaven. Unto the which I beseech Almighty God bring us all. Amen.



The A R G U M E N T.

The Emperor of glory, Christ Jesus, hath two daughters, the one fair and the other foul; the fair daughter is worldly pleasures sought of many, the foul is poverty and trouble sought by few. But he that loveth God, will suffer all trouble for the obtaining of him.

The Twenty-seventh History.

IN Rome dwelt an emperor named Domitian, which had two daughters, the one fair, the other ill-favoured; wherefore he proclaimed that whoso would marry his fair daughter should have nothing with her but her comely person, but whoso would marry his foul daughter, should have his empire after his decease. Now there came many to marry his fair daughter. To whom the emperor said, if ye marry her, ye shall have nothing with her but her beautiful person, and if I give her to one rather than to another, you will grudge; therefore you shall fight for her: then the nobles, for the love of that beautiful damsel, set a day of battle, and many were slain, but at last one

obtained the victory, and espoused that fair lady.

Then the second daughter said to her father, My sister is married with great gladness, but no man careth for my company; what shall I do, I know not. Then said the emperor, My daughter, I shall proclaim, that what man will marry thee, I shall assure him the empire after my decease. Then this young lady, tho' she was ill favoured, rejoiced greatly. Soon after there came a young knight which espoused the lady, and after the death of the emperor, he was crowned emperor, and she empress: and they lived long in peace.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth Christ, which had two daughters: The fair daughter is the world which is delectable to many men: the soul is poverty and trouble, whom few men desire. Nevertheless, a proclamation was made in scripture, that whoso would have the world, should have nothing with her but her fairness; that is worldly vanities. But whoso will marry the foul daughter that is receive trouble for God's love, shall obtain the empire of heaven.

Many have sought for the fair daughter, that is, travelled by sea and land, for riches and there be many slain, for there is nothing here but pride and covetousness, by which the world is put to great damage, so he that married the fair daughter, is he that setteth his affections on this world. But he that marieth the foul daughter; that is the good Christian, which for the love of heavenly joys forsaketh this world, and obeyeth God in all things, such a man certainly shall obtain heaven. Unto which bring us our Lord Jesus, Amen.

The A R G U M E N T.

Devotion, prayer, and thanksgiving, is a sweet music in the ears of God. We are hereby warned after offending, not to relapse again; but to bathe ourselves in the well of

repentance, that we may live with Christ in everlasting joy.

The Twenty-eight History.

IN Rome dwelt the emperor, Andromicha, who much loved music. He had within his palace a well, that whosoever were drunk, by drinking the water thereof, should become sober again. There also dwelt in the court a knight named Ydrony, who oftentimes would be drunk. And when he perceived himself drunk, then he drank of that water, so that whatsoever the emperor said unto him, he answered so, that no drunkenness might be seen in him; and he was greatly beloved of the emperor.

Once this emperor heard in the forest a nightingale singing, and often rose early to hear his sweet song, wherefore many of his men said, our lord delighteth so much in the nightingale's song and in Ydrony, that his love is withdrawn from us: Then said an old knight, if you will follow my counsel I shall deliver you of the knight Ydrony, and of this Nightingale. So he chanced to espy this knight Ydrony drunk, wherefore he locked the well, and when Ydrony came to refresh himself, he found it locked.

Now the emperor having a great business to do, sent for this knight, but he was so drunk that he could not move his tongue. So when the emperor saw this he was vexed, and commanded him to be no more seen in his land on pain of death. Then his foes rejoiced and said, Now let us find a way to be delivered of the nightingale. So not long after, this old knight espyed that the nightingale used to sit upon a tree above the foresaid well, where her mate came to her; nevertheless in his absence she took often another mate, and then descended to the well to bathe herself, that her mate should feel no evil scent of what she had done. When the knight had seen this, he locked the well, and when the nightingale would have descended, she

found the well closed: Wherefore she flew into the tree again. Then came her mate, and saw what she had done then brought a great multitude of nightingales, and tore his mate in pieces.

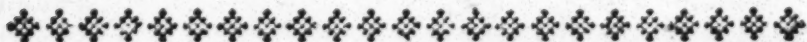
And thus was the knight put away, and the nightingale slain, and the emperor disappointed of his wonted comfort.

The M O R A L.

This emperor betokeneth Christ, who loveth the song of devotion; the well betokeneth acknowledging of sins, therefore if any be drunk with sin, let him acknowledge his sins, and he shall be safe.

This Ydrony betokeneth every man that returneth again to sin after his repentance. Nevertheless, if he that hath thus sinned, will drink of the well of acknowledging his sin, he shall receive spiritual strength.

The nightingale betokeneth the soul that sitteth on the tree of holy doctrine. But this soul doth evil as oft as she consenteth to sin, nevertheless if she bathe herself with the waters of contrition, God shall love her. But the fiends of hell withdraw us from acknowledgment, and reconciliation of ourselves to God. And thus many have been put to death everlastingly. And therefore study we to bathe our souls with the water of contrition; and then we shall be sure to have joy everlasting. Unto which God bring us all, Amen.



The A R G U M E N T.

Every good Christian ought to prepare against the assaults of the devil; we are here put in mind of our deliverance by the blood of Christ, which is a terror to the devil, if we believe in him as the bulwark of our Salvation.

The Twenty-ninth History.

IN Rome there dwelt an emperor named Hermes, which had a city, strongly walled, and a bell

hanging in the midst of it. Whensoever the emperor went to battle this bell was rung : but no man could ring the bell, but a virgin. Now it befel that many venomous beasts poisoned numbers of the inhabitants of the city : wherefore they cried, What shall we do ? we are in danger of perishing by reason of these cruel beasts. Then said the emperor to his wise men, what think you is best to be done in this matter ? At which one of the wisest of them answered, and said, My lord, in your palace is a lion ; set up a piece of timber, and thereunto let him be nailed, and when other venomous beasts see him thus used, they will forsake our city, and we will live in safety. Then they did so to the lion, and the other beasts fled for fear, and came no more thither.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth God, the city betokeneth the soul walled about with virtues. The bell is a clear-conscience, that warneth a man when he should fight against the devil : the virgin is reason : the venomous beasts betoken the fiends of Hell, which destroy mankind.

The inhabitants of the city, betoken the patriarchs and prophets, which besought God that mankind might be saved ; and it was counselled that a Lion, that is Christ, should be nailed upon the cross ; for which the devil dares not come nigh them. And thus men come to everlasting bliss. Unto the which bring us, O Lamb of God, who shed thy precious blood for us. Amen.

The A R G U M E N T.

Here is signified the thraldom of man by sin, till Christ descended to set him at liberty, and put him in possession of the palace of everlasting felicity.

The thirtieth History.

IN Rome there dwelt an emperor, named Menelay, who ordained that what innocent person was put

in prison, if he might escape to the palace, he should be safe. Not long after a knight was accused and put in prison, where he lay a long time, and had no light but at a little window: whereat he mourned greatly. Nevertheless, there came daily a Nightingale to the window, and sung full sweetly, and when she left off singing she flew into the knight's bosom, and he fed her. It happened one day that the knight was greatly cast down: nevertheless, the bird fed on kernels of nuts, and he said, sweet bird, I have sustained thee a long time, what wilt thou give me now to comfort me? remember thyself well.

When the bird heard this, she flew away and tarried three days, and then brought in her mouth a precious stone, and laid it in the knight's bosom: the knight marvelling took the stone, and touched his fetters therewith, and they fell off. And then he touched the doors of the prison, and they opened, and he escaped to the palace. Then the keeper blew his horn thrice, and cried, the thief is gone. And with that he ran towards the knight, but the knight shot an arrow wherewith he slew him, and then ran to the palace, where he found succour against the law.

The MORAL.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth Christ, who ordained a law, that what person might escape and come to him by amendment of life, should find perpetual help. This knight betokeneth every one that is innocent, and accused unjustly: the keeper betokeneth the devil, that keepeth men fast bound by sin: the third betokeneth the voice of heaven, that saith, turn again, and I will receive thee to grace. For when mankind was in thralldom to Satan in the prison of hell; Christ brought all mankind out of the prison of hell; therefore let us touch our sins with the stone, that is by acknowledging our sin, and then the chains of our oppression shall be broken, and we

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shall obtain help in the palace of heaven. And if the Devil blow the horn of sin, then let us shoot at him the arrow of faith and repentance, and he shall flee from us, and then we may obtain heavenly bliss. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



The ARGUMENT.

A poor man exalted to dignity, is here admonished not to be unthankful, else God will depose him, and he that helped thee, be he never so base, may have better favour with God and man than thyself, wherefore be warned of ingratitude, and know thyself, thy God, and thy friend.

The Thirty-first History.

THERE dwelt in Rome an emperor named Ebo-
lides, who walked into a forest to take his
pleasure, where he met a poor man, and said to
him, Friend, whence art thou? My lord, quoth he,
I am your subject, and am in great poverty. Then
said the emperor, If thou wert true, I would promote
thee to great riches; tell me thy name, quoth he, I
am called Lentulus, and I will do you true service,
and if otherwise let me be punished; then the empe-
ror made him a knight and steward of his land. But
then he waxed proud, and despised all men. Not
long after, this steward rode by a forest, and charged
the forester to make an hundred pits in the ground,
and cover them with grafs and small boughs, that
wild beasts might fall in, and be taken. Not long
after, as he rode to see if these pits were made, he
bethought how wealthy and mighty a man he was,
and said to himself, there is no man greater than I;
and with that he fell into one of the pits, and for the
deepness could not rise again, wherefore he was in
great perplexity; and straightway came a fierce lion,
and fell into the same pit, also an ape, and serpent.
Then the steward was exceedingly afraid.

There was a poor man, named Guy, that had only an ass, whereon he carried sticks and wood from the forest, and sold them for his sustenance.—This poor Guy came by the deep pit, and heard a man cry, For God's sake help me, and I shall recompense thee. Then this poor Guy stood still on the pit's brink, and said, Friend, I am come, why hast thou called me? Then said the knight, I am steward to the emperor, and am fallen into the pit, and here be a lion, an ape, and an horrible serpent, and I fear I shall be devoured: therefore get a long rope to draw me out, and I will make thee rich for ever hereafter. Then said poor Guy, I have nothing to live on but that I gather wood, and sell it, wherewith I am sustained: nevertheless I shall fulfil thy will: and if thou reward me not, it will be a great loss to me and to my poor wife. Then the steward swore to promote him to great honour and wealth. Then Guy went and bought a long rope, and came to the pit, and said, Bind thee about the middle therewith, that I may pull thee up. But the lion caught the rope, and Guy drew up the lion, who thanked him in his manner, and ran to the wood. The second time that Guy let down the rope, the ape caught it and was drawn up; he thanked Guy in his manner. The third time he drew up the serpent. Then the steward cried, O my dear friend, now let down the rope to me. Then the steward bound himself about the middle, and Guy drew him up. And then he said to Guy, Come to me to-morrow, and I will reward thee.—When Guy went home, his wife demanded why he gathered no wood that day? then he told her of the event as it befel, and that he should go and fetch his reward on the morrow. So Guy went to the palace, and said to the porter, I pray thee go to the steward, and say to him, that there is a poor man at the gate that spake with him yesterday in the forest: the porter went and told the steward; then said the

steward, he lieth, charge him that he trouble me no more. — Then went poor Guy sorrowful home: but his wife said, go you again and prove him thrice.

Then on the morrow he went to the porter, praying him to do his errand again: the porter said, But I fear it will be to thy hurt. So he told the steward, that this poor man was again returned: then the steward went out and beat poor Guy, and left him in peril of death: then his wife came with her ass, and led him home, and all that she had she spent on physicians to help him; and when he was whole, he went to the forest as he wont. And as he went he saw a lion driving before him ten asses, laden with rich jewels and merchandise; and he knew that it was the lion he drew out of the pit: this lion left not Guy till all the asses were entered into his yard, and then the lion ran into the wood. Guy found great riches therein: and made proclamation of them, but none challenged them. So Guy sold the goods, and was made rich: nevertheless he went to the forest as before. And one time he espied the ape on the top of a tree, breaking boughs and throwing them down, so that he soon loaded his ass. Now as he sat binding his faggots, he saw the serpent that he drew out of the pit, bearing in her mouth a precious stone of three colours, which she let fall at his feet, and went away: then Guy took up the stone, and went to a jeweller, and said, tell me the property of this precious stone; then said the jeweller this stone hath three properties, *viz.* joy without sorrow; plenty without want; and light without darkness: and it hath another virtue, that if he sell it for less than its worth, the stone returneth again to him.

Not long after, Guy bought great possessions, and was made a knight. Now the emperor said to him, my friend, sometime thou wert in poverty, and art rich by virtue of a little stone; pray, sell me that

stone. Sir Guy answered, That may I not do; for so long as I have that stone, I am sure of joy without sorrow, plenty without want, and light without darkness. Then the emperor had a greater desire to buy the stone than ever, and said, either forsake the empire, or sell me the stone. Then said he, My lord, it is at your disposal; nevertheless, I tell you, if you pay not for it as it is worth, it will come to me again: then the emperor gave him a thousand pound for it.

On the morrow Sir Guy found the stone in his coffer which he had sold the emperor: then went he again to the emperor, and said, Yesterday I sold you a stone, which I would fain see. The emperor went for the stone, but found it not, wherefore he came again and told Sir Guy it was lost; then said Sir Guy, I told you yesterday, that I might not sell it, except I had the value thereof; and yesterday I received a thousand pound of you, therefore, and this day I found it in my coffer again, and with that he shewed it to the emperor, who said, Sir Guy, tell me how thou camest by this stone; then Sir Guy told the emperor all his adventures in the forest, and how the steward instead of rewarding him, had bruised and beat him. When the emperor heard this, his heart was moved against the steward, and said to him; thou wretched creature, unreasonable beasts rewarded him, and thou a reasonable man beat him that saved thee out of the pit; therefore I judge thee to be hanged this day, and all thy goods and lands I grant to Sir Guy; and he shall be my steward. When Sir Guy was thus rewarded, he was well beloved as long as he lived, and ended his life with honour and peace.

The M O R A L.

This emperor betokeneth the Father of heaven; the poor man betokeneth every man that is promoted to riches and honour. But many such cause deep pits to be made, of unkindness, and malice, against simple

men, into which they oft fall themselves : this Guy betokens every godly man, fearing God in the forest of this world ; his wood betokeneth his faith and good works, which he carrieth upon his ass, or human endeavour : this Guy draweth up the lion, that is man's soul, out of the pit, by the cord of virtues ; he drew up the ape also, that is contrary will to reason, for of all beasts the ape is most like man. He drew up also a serpent, by which is to be understood repentance : then at the last he drew up the steward from the pit of sin.

The lion gave the godly poor man ten asses laden with merchandise, that is, Christ gives unto every righteous man ten commandments : the ape also gathered him wood, as oft as the just man worketh the fruits of faith : the serpent also gave him a little stone of three diverse colours, which betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we seek by repentance ; for Christ faith, I am a living stone. Christ hath three colours, which betokeneth the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, and the humility of the Holy Ghost : therefore whosoever gets this precious stone, shall have joy without sorrow, plenty without want, and light without darkness. Unto which bring us, Lord Jesus. Amen.

The ARGUMENT.

By the nativity of Christ is gladness and salvation ; yet is man unthankful unto God. We are warned to cleave to Christ by faith and hope. The preachers of God's word are sent to confound the devil by sound doctrine. Life and death is set before men : we ought to choose that life that may be for our everlasting comfort, to which bring us, good Lord. Amen.

The Thirty-second History.

THERE dwelt in Rome an emperor, named Anselm, who was a long time without a child, wherefore the nobles were sorrowful. Anselm one evening bethought himself that he had no heir, and

how the king of Ampuly warred on him continually, and had no son to make defence in his absence. He saw a vision in his sleep; viz. — The morning more clear than its usual, and the moon paler on the one side than the other; and he saw a bird of two colours, fed by two beasts, with their heat; and then came more beasts, bowing their breasts towards the bird, and went their way: then came three birds that sung so sweetly, that the emperor awaked. In the morning he called his philosophers and nobles, and told them his dream, charging them to tell him the signification thereof. When the emperor told it to them, the philosophers answered, the vision betokeneth good: the moon betokeneth the empress, that hath lost part of her colour thro' the conception of a son; the little bird betokeneth the son that she shall bear; the two beasts betokeneth the men of the empire, which shall obey the son; the other beasts betokeneth other nations that shall do him homage: these birds that sang so sweetly betokeneth the Romans, who shall rejoice because of his birth. This is the interpretation of your dream.

Soon after, the empress was delivered of a son; — When the king of Ampuly heard this, he thought thus with himself, Now he hath a son, who when he cometh to maturity, will revenge my wrong done against his father; therefore I will send to his father and intreat peace. Then the emperor wrote again to him, that if he would find good and sufficient sureties to keep the peace, to do him homage, and to pay a certain tribute, he would grant him peace.

When the king read the emperor's letter, he called his council: then said they, in that he desired surety for the peace, to this we answer, Ye have but one daughter, and the emperor but one son; wherefore let them marry, and that may be perpetual peace. Then the king sent messengers to the emperor, craving that his son

and his daughter might be married. All this pleased the emperor, yet he sent again, saying, If his daughter were a clean virgin he would consent. Now the king's daughter was a pure virgin: therefore the king furnished a fair ship wherein he might send his daughter to the emperor; but a storm arose, and the ship broke upon a rock, and they were all drowned, save only the young lady, and when the tempest ceased, a huge whale followed to devour both the ship and her. Wherefore she smote fire with a stone, wherewith the ship was lightned, and the whale durst not adventure for fear of the light. But at cock crowing, this young lady slept, and the fire ceased, and the whale came and devoured the virgin. And when she awaked and found herself in the whale's belly, she with a knife wounded the whale; and when the whale felt himself wounded, he swam to land: there was in the country near by, a noble earl, named Pirris, who saw the whale coming to land; wherefore he wounded him; and the maiden in his belly cried, O friends, have mercy on me, for I am a king's daughter, and a true virgin. When the earl heard this, he wondered, and opening the whale took out the young lady. And when the earl heard her story, he comforted and kept her till she was refreshed. And in the mean time he sent messengers to the emperor, letting him to know how the king's daughter was saved.

Then the emperor said, Ah good maiden, for the love of my son thou hast suffered much; nevertheless if thou be worthy to be his wife, soon shall I prove. And he caused three vessels to be brought: the first of pure gold, but within full of dead men's bones, and on it was graven this poesy, Who so chooseth me, shall find what he deserveth: the second vessel was of silver, filled with earth and worms, and the poesy was, Who so chooseth me shall find what his nature desireth: the third vessel was of lead, full of precious

stones, with this poesy, Whoso chooseth me shall find that God hath disposed for him. These vessels the emperor shewed her, and then said, if thou choose not that one wherein is profit to thee and others, then shalt thou not have my son. And with that she beheld the first vessel, and read the superscription, saying tho' this vessel be precious, and of pure gold, I know not what is within; therefore will I not choose it. And then beheld she the second of silver and read the superscription, thinking thus, If I choose this, I know there shall I find that nature desireth, viz. the lust of the flesh, and therefore this vessel will I not choose.

When the emperor heard this, he said, Fair maiden, open the third vessel, and see if thou hast well chosen or no. And she found it full of gold and precious stones: then said the emperor, thou hast wisely chosen, thou shalt marry my son; and so they were married with great solemnity, and with much honour continued to their lives end.

The M O R A L.

This emperor betokeneth the Father of heaven: the empress conceived when the angel Gabriel said, Lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a Child, the firmament began to clear when he lightened the world with his birth, the moon began to wax pale, when the face of the Virgin was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost: this little bird betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ; the two beasts betokeneth the ox and the ass, that Joseph brought with him, which honoured him in his birth; these other beasts betokeneth all mankind. But when Christ was born he besought peace from God in baptism, at our baptism we promised to forsake the devil and his lusts: the king gave his daughter in marriage to the emperor's son; so every one ought to give his soul in marriage to God. But our soul must sail by the sea of this world, where ariseth a tempest, that is, trouble, temptation, and evil suggestions, and drown-

eth the virtues that the soul received in baptism: the great whale is the devil who lieth in wait for the soul: therefore let us smite the fire of charity, and the devil shall have no power over us. Many men begin well, but at last sleep in sin. When the devil perceiveth this, he devoureth the sinner; therefore let us smite the devil with the knife of repentance, then kindle the fire of charity, and then he shall cast thee on the land of good life.

The earl that came to slay the whale, betokeneth a preacher, which dwelleth beside the sea, that is, beside the world, and not in the world. We must all cry as the maiden did, acknowledging our sins, and then we shall be delivered from the devil: the emperor sheweth this maiden three vessels, that is, God putteth before man life and death. And yet man is uncertain whether he will choose life or death.

By the first vessel is understood rich men, who shine like gold in the world; yet are full of dead men's bones, that is, evil works: therefore if any man choose such a life, he shall have that he deserveth. By the second vessel we understand some wise men who shine in fair speeches, but within they be full of worms and earth; that is, their fair speech shall not avail them at the day of judgment, for they shall suffer everlasting pain. By the third vessel we are to understand, a simple and pure life of humility and obedience, and such men bear precious stones; that is, faith and works pleasing to God; by which they be espoused to Christ, and obtain the heritage of heaven. Unto the which bring us our Saviour Jesus Christ that died on the cross. Amen.

THE ARGUMENT.

Many by baptism promised to forsake the devil. Christ sorroweth for our sins; he requireth service of us at six several ages, but we are unready for him, yet God spareth us even till the last, and if then we repent, he will receive us into his heavenly mercy and favour.

The Thirty-third History

THere dwelt in Rome an emperor, named Calapodus, who took a fair lady to wife, who bear him a son. When he came to twenty years of age, he said, Father, you are old, and not fit to govern : therefore give it to me, and live at your ease : then answered the emperor, I will have a letter obligatory, that whensoever you do any thing against my will, that then I will depose you : then the son granted this, but afterwards he waxed so proud, that he feared neither God nor man. But his father suffered it patiently.

At last there fell a great darth, so that many died for want : this old emperor was by himself, and began to have need ; wherefore he went to his son for maintenance, which his son granted. But in short time his father fell sick, and prayed his son to give him a draught of must ; his son said, my must is not good for you : then said the emperor, give me a draught of thy wine. His son said, my wine is not yet fined, and I will not broach it till it be cleared : then said his father, give me some of the third tun : that I will not do, said he, for it is not good for a sick man : then his father asked him for a draught of the fourth tun. But he said, it is weak and not good for you : then said his father, give me then of the fifth tun. No, quoth he, for it is full of dregs, and scarcely fit for hogs. So when his father was well, he went to the king of Jerusalem, and complained of his son, and shewed him the letter obligatory. When the king heard this, he called the emperor's son to answer, but he could not : wherefore the king put him out of his empire, and seated his father there again ; and so continued all the days of his life.

The M O R A L.

This emperor betokeneth Jesus Christ ; the son betokeneth mankind to whom he gave this world. Mankind made an obligation in baptism, to serve Christ and forsake the devil, and his works. This emperor began

to wax sick ; that is, Christ is troubled when men break his commandments, wherefore he thirsts to help our souls, and then he asketh a draught of the first tun ; that is, the first age of childhood to be spent in his service ; but the wicked child answereth and saith, No, for my childhood is musty ; that is, it is so young that it may not attempt to serve God. Then God desireth of the wine of the second tun ; then answereth the wicked youth and saith, that his wine is not apt to serve God. And then asketh he of the third tun ; that is his youth. Then answereth the young man, the wine is very strong, and ought to be spent in manly deeds on this world, and not in good life, which would make him feeble : then asketh he of the fourth tun. And then answered the wicked man, Aged men are feeble, and may not fast to cause his own death : then asketh our Lord of the fifth tun ; that is, of old age. But the wicked old man saith, that his wine is too feeble, for if he should fast one day, it were time on the morrow to make his grave ; and then asketh he of the sixth tun, that is, when a man is blind. But the wretched man saith, woe to me, because I served not God while I was in youth ; now there is nothing left but the lees and dregs of wretchedness ; therefore what shall it avail me now to turn towards God ?

○ Nevertheless, God is merciful ; and he is content to have the lees of his tun : that is, the good will, tho' he doth not serve him otherwise. But there be many that will give nothing to him ; wherefore Christ shall complain to the king of Jerusalem at the judgment day, and then shall he give sentence, saying, I have hungered, and ye gave me no meat ; I have been naked, &c. And when this done, then shall such men be put to everlasting pain, from which deliver us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The ARGUMENT

Man being captivated by Satan, the heavenly Father did

espouse him and embrace him within the bosom of love; yet the world grudgeth that we should serve our God and forsake her, but to eschew such malignity we are here taught.

The thirty-fourth History.

IN Rome dwelt a mighty emperor, named Anthony, in whose reign the rovers had taken prisoner a mighty man's son of another region, and brought him to this emperor's prison: this young man wrote to his father for his ransom, but he would not send it; so he wept sore for the unkindness of his father. This emperor had a daughter, which visited the prisoner, wishing him to be merry: to whom he answered, How shall I be merry thus bound in prison, and my father will not pay my ransom? the maiden was moved with pity, and said, if thou wilt make me thy wife, I shall deliver thee from thine anguish: then said the prisoner, I promise to fulfill your request, and then the damsel delivered him, and fled with him to his father's house.

When his father saw him, he asked why he brought the maiden with him?: then said his son, this damsel delivered me out of prison; and therefore she shall be my wife. Then said his father, I will consent for two causes: the first is, that her father might have had for thy deliverance great plenty of riches, and so being false to her own father might have had for thy deliverance great plenty of riches, and so being false to her own father, she will not be true to another man: the second reason is the cause why she delivered thee, was only for carnal lust. For at thy deliverance she made covenant with thee to be thy wife.

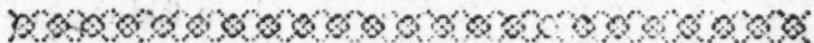
The maiden answered and said, as for the first reason, that I should be untrue to my father, that is false; for my father hath plenty of riches, and therefore I helped him for pity; for thou his father wouldst not pay his ransom. Unto the other reason, that I delivered him for lust; for all carnal love is caused by beauty: now his imprisonment had taken away his

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strength and beauty: for he was brought low and un-
lusty to sport, and therefore pity only moved me to
deliver him. Then said the son, I was in peril of
death, and wrote unto you for my ransom, and you
would not help me, but this gentle damsel hath saved
me from death, therefore surely she shall be my wife.
So forthwith he married her with great honour, and
with her ended his life.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth the Father of
heaven; the young man betokeneth all mankind which
was taken by the sin of Adam, and cast into the prison
of hell. His father would not ransom him; that is, the
world would do nothing for him. This fair daughter
betokeneth the God-head, which took manhood of the
Virgin Mary, and upon this condition he delivered man-
kind out of the prison of hell. But the father that is
the world, would not suffer that man should become the
spouse of Jesus Christ, but that he would forsake our
Lord. Therefore if we follow the world, we shall fall
into the snare of the devil. From the which defend
us our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.



The A R G U M E N T.

*It is the ordinance of God, that no man shall labour for
worldly promotion by any evil courses. Man for his
first transgression should have been judged to hell, had
not the Son of God by his death, saved mankind, and
destroyed Satan, so that thereby he might live with him
everlastingly.*

The thirty-fifth History.

THere dwelt in Rome an emperor named Alexan-
der, which loved the virtue of bounty, where-
fore he ordained, that no man on pain of death should
turn a fluke at his meat, but only eat the white side,
else he should suffer death, but ere he died, he should

ask three petitions of the emperor, (except his life) which should be granted him. There came an earl, and his son, from a strange country, and dined with the emperor; and was served with flukes, after he had eaten the white side he turned the black side and began to eat, wherefore he was accused to the emperor, because he had offended against the law.

Then the earl's son fell on his knees, and said to the emperor, let me die for my father: then said the emperor, it pleaseth me. Then said the earl's son, I ask the benefit of the law; that is, that I may have my three petitions granted: the first is, I desire that your daughter may ly one night with me before I die, which the emperor granted against his will: but this knight deflowered her not. The second petition is this, I ask all thy treasure, and the emperor granted it. Then the earl's son imparted it both to poor and rich, and thereby obtained their good will. My third petition is this, that all their eyes may be put out that saw my father eat the black side of the fluke. And they that saw him said within themselves, if we acknowledge that we saw him, then shall our eyes be put out. And so none would accuse him. Then said the emperor, as no man will acknowledge that they saw him turn the fluke, therefore I will not that thy father shall die. Lo, thus the son saved his father's life.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends this emperor betokeneth God, which ordained, that no man should turn the black side of a fluke: that is no man to labour for riches by falsehood. The earl betokeneth Adam, who turned up the black side, when he eat the forbidden fruit, but his son, that betokeneth Christ, proffered himself to die for him; and God granted that he should die for mankind.

Before he died, he asked three petitions. The first was, that he might have his daughter, which betokeneth the soul of man, and bring her to his bosom. The second

petition was this, all the emperor's treasure, which betokeneth the treasure of heaven. The third petition is this, that all their eyes should be put out, that is, that all false witnesses may be put from heaven. And thus he led him up into the palace of heaven. Unto the which palace bring us our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

THE ARGUMENT.

The Father of heaven promoteth some poor men, but they exalting themselves without regard of God's goodness, are again made abject. The devil worketh deceit against the godly. Christ came to minister eternal life unto our souls, which before were dead; and to purchase happiness with his blood.

The Thirty-sixth History.

IN Rome there dwelt an emperor, named Leonicius, who met in a forest with a poor man, to whom he said thou seemest poor, but if thou be honest, I will promote thee to great riches and honour: which the emperor soon did. When he was thus promoted, he waxed proud, and wanted to usurp to be emperor. When the emperor heard this, anon he exiled him and all his party, and ordained other men in their stead. And when the banished men heard that strangers had taken possession of their goods, they requested them to a banquet, where they gave them five poisoned messes, whereby they died instantly. Then said the emperor's son, my lord not far hence is a nation, where dwelleth a maiden which hath an orchard, wherein is a well, the water whereof being cast upon a dead man, he shall live. And straightway the emperor's son went into the said nation, and fell in conceit with the maiden, entered into the garden, and tasted the water. And then he made five deep trenches in the ground, in which the water ran till it came where the dead men lay, and when the water touched them they arose to life. And when the emperor saw this, he crowned

his son with a lawrel crown in token of victory and so he ended his life in rest and peace.

THE MORAL.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth the Father of heaven. The poor man betokeneth Lucifer that was exalted, enthroned in heaven, but thought he might be more than God; wherefore he was exiled to hell; and in his place man was exalted. The devil seeing this, bade Adam and Eve to a banquet, when when they did eat of the apple against God's commandment. And at this banquet they were served with five poisoned messes, that is their five wits according in eating the apple. This hearing the emperor's son, Christ Jesus, he came down from heaven and found in the blessed Virgin Mary the well of a manhood, and conjoined it to the God-head. After that he made five trenches in the ground, that is, five wounds in his body, out of which ran both blood and water whereby all mankind was raised from death to life. Unto the which bring us, our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, Amen.

XX

THE ARGUMENT.

The Father of heaven extendeth his goodness towards man, yet he taketh contrary ways for which being exiled from felicity, he leads a miserable life: but being reconciled by the death of his Saviour, he reposesteth the heritage of heaven.

The Thirty-seventh History

IN the reign of the emperor Dustanus, there dwelt a knight that had two sons. One of them married a common harlot. The knight hearing this, exiled him; he begot on this woman a son, and falling sick besought his father for mercy, who took compassion on him. And when he was brought again to his father, he gave his child to him, who nourished him as his son. When the other son heard this, he said to

his father, you are out of your right mind, for my brother which begat this child married the common woman against your will, therefore I think that you are out of your right mind to nourish him.

Then his father said because thy brother is reconciled to me, thou art envious, and unkind; but indeed no unkind man shall have mine heritage, for thou mightest have reconciled thyself to him, but thou wouldest not: therefore of mine heritage thou shalt have no part.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, the father betokeneth the Father of heaven his two sons betoken the nature of angels, and men: Man was married with a common harlot, when he eat the forbidden fruit. The son betokeneth mankind. This knight's son, after his sin, was put from joy into this valley of tears. But by the passion of Christ he was reconciled. But the other son that betokeneth the devil grudgeth against our reconciling, saying, that for sin, we ought not to come unto heaven. Unto which bring us onr Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

The A R G U M E N T.

We ought always to behave justly, and to use the poor with equity: nor injure rich men, nor defraud them of their estate. They that do the contrary, are worthy of everlasting death.

The Thirty-eight History.

THERE dwelt in Rome an emperor, named Donatus, which made three images, of which one held out his hand straight, and had on his finger a ring of gold. The second had a beard of gold: And the third a mantle of gold. Commanding upon pain of death, that none should take away the ring, beard nor mantle.

Afterwards one Dionyse a tyrant, came and took away the ring, beard and mantle. And being accused, and examined of the trespass, he answered, The first

image held forth his hand, as if he would say, I give thee this ring : and therefore I took the ring, as a gift. And when I saw the second image, with a beard, I thought I knew the father of the image had no beard, and now his son had a beard, and therefore I took it from him, that he should be like his father. As for the mantle of gold, I thought it not behoveful for him in winter ; for gold is naturally cold, which might cause his death, and therefore I took it from him. But the emperor said, What should cause thee rather than any other man, to deipoil the images, since I forbid it ? therefore thine own mouth condemns thee. Then the emperor commanded one of his squires to smite off his head : and so he died a shameful death.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth Almighty God, the three images betokeneth the poor men, the rich men, and mighty men : the tyrant Dionyse betokeneth all officers, which take money from poor men, and say, It is given me : they take away the beard from the rich man, and say, This man is richer than his father therefore make him like his forefather : they take also the mantle of gold from the mighty, and say, This man is too hot in power against us, therefore take his mantle of might, and so they put him out of his office. From the which save us, he that shed his precious blood for us. Amen.

The A R G U M E N T.

Man ought to nourish Christ, by faith and good works, and their reward. We must watch, lest we fall into temptation ; and we shall then attain unto the reward of heavenly blifs.

The Thirty-ninth History.

THere dwelt in Rome an emperor named Emilius, who had a hopeful son : then the states came and sought to have the keeping of his son. Immedi-

ately the emperor proclaimed, that in whose house were first found fire and water, the good man should have his son in keeping and should nourish him cleanly, and feed him wholesomely. And when the child came to age, he should be promoted; wherefore many men made ready fire and water, in hope to have the child. But in the night a tyrant named Sulapius, quenched the fire, and threw out the water. Nevertheless a man named Jonathas laboured and kept both fire and water.

One morning the herald sought every house for fire and water, but found none till he came to Jonathas house: Wherefore the emperor delivered his son to Jonathas, who led him home, and made a strong chamber, and painted on the wall ten images, with this posie, whoso defileth these images shall die. And then caused a gallows to be drawn and a man hanging, with this posie, So shall he be served that nourisheth the emperor's son amiss. And he made a chair of gold, and himself therein, crowned, with this superscription, whoso nourisheth the emperor's son cleanly, thus shall he be rewarded. Now oftentimes, he was tempted to defile the images, but when he read the superscription the temptation ceased. And when he went to the gallows, and read that posie, and for dread kept the child better, and diligently attended on him. And when he beheld the chair, he was right joyful, thinking to have good reward. When the emperor heard of this, he sent for him, and thanking him, promoted him to honour and dignity.

The M O R A L.

This emperor betokeneth God, the Son betokeneth Christ. The herald betokeneth St. John Baptist who was sent to prepare the way to him. The states betokens the Patriarchs and Prophets, which desire greatly to nourish our Lord Jesus Christ. The fire betokeneth the Holy Ghost, and the water contrition.

Jonathas betokeneth every christian man which yields to God the fire of repentance, and the water of contrition. Therefore let us watch as Jonathas did, and let us call masons; that is, preachers which can make a chamber of stone; that is, faith, and hope, then let us paint ten images, that is, the ten commandments; and if you keep well the emperor's son, thou shalt sit in a chair of gold, crowned with a crown of gold, which grant us our blessed Saviour Jesus.

The ARGUMENT.

The soul of man espoused unto Christ, the flesh procureth it to sin. The redemption of mankind. The deceits of unthankful hearts, &c.

The Fortieth History.

IN Rome lived the emperor Menolay, who wedded the king's daughter Hungaria, a fair lady and merciful. On a time the emperor bethought him to visit the holy land. And on the morrow he said to the empress, and to his brother, Dear lady, I purpose to visit the holy land; wherefore I ordained thee governance over all my people, and my brother to be thy steward

Then said the empress, I much fear ye shall not escape thence with your life. The emperor comforted her, and kissed her, and after that went toward Jerusalem. Then the emperor's brother became so proud that he oppressed poor and rich; and daily stirred the empress to commit sin with him. But she never consented. Nevertheless he oftentimes tempted her. So that at the last she called to her three or four of the worthiest nobles, and said, My lord's brother oppresseth poor and rich men, wherefore I command you in my lord's name, that ye cast him into prison, and dread ye not, for if my lord knew what he had done, he would put him to death. Immediately he was put in prison, where he lay long; till at last the emperor

came home. Then his brother said, if my brother inquire the cause of mine imprisonment of the empress, and she tell him all the truth, I shall have no favour of my brother, but lose my life : then sent he a messenger unto the empress, praying her to come to the prison door, that he might speak with her. The empress came ; and he said, O lady, have mercy upon me, for if my brother find me in prison, I shall die without any remedy : then said the empress, If thou wouldest be a good man, thou shouldest find mercy : then did he promise her to amend. And the empress, delivered him and apparelled him according to his state ; and then said, Now take thy steed and come with me to meet my Lord. And then the empress and he, with many other knights, rode forth to meet the emperor. And as they rode they saw a deer run before them, wherefore they ran after it, and left none with the empress, but the brother ; who seeing that no man was there, said, Lo, Lady, here is a private forest, and long ago I spake to thee of love ; come consent that I ly with thee.

Then said the empress, Art thou returned to thy folly again ? then said he, If thou wilt not consent to me, I shall hang thee here upon a tree, and thou shalt die an evil death. The empress said, tho' thou smitest off my head, thou shalt never have my consent to such a sin. Then he unclothed her all save her smock, and hanged her up by the hair upon a tree, and tied her steed before her, and so rode and told his fellows, that a great host of men met him and took the empress away from him.

On the third day after, there came an earl to hunt, and his hounds came near the tree where the empress hanged. The earl wondered to see her thus hanging, and said, O woman, who art thou ; and wherefore hangest thou here ? the empress, almost ready to die, answered, I am a stranger, and of a far country ; but

how came I hither God knoweth : then answered the earl, Whose horse is this ? she said, it was hers : then he said, O fair lady, I will deliver thee, if thou wilt go and nourish my only daughter at home in my castle ; and if thou keep her well thou shalt have a good reward. Then she promised, and he took her down, and led her home, and gave her the keeping of his daughter, which lay at night in the earl's chamber, and in the chamber there burned a lamp, between the empress' and the earl's bed. Now the earl's steward loved this empress, and often spake to her. But she said, I will never love any man but him whom I am bound to love by God's commandment. And the steward went his way in wrath, vowing to be revenged on her.

Within a short time after the earl's chamber door was left unshut, which the steward perceiving, he went in, and cut the throat of the earl's daughter, and put the bloody knife into the empress' hands, she being asleep. When the countess awaked, and saw by the light of the lamp the bloody knife in the empress' hand, she said to the earl, O my lord, behold in yonder lady's hand a wonderful thing : then the earl looked towards the empress' bed, and saw the bloody knife ; and cried, Awake, woman, what is this in thy hand ? then the empress awaked, and the knife fell out of her hand, and she found the earl's daughter dead, and all the bed wet with blood—Then said the countess, O my lord, let this devilish woman be put to the foulest death that can be thought upon.

Then the earl said to the empress, God knoweth that thou hast slain my daughter, for I saw the knife in thy hand, and therefore thou shalt die a foul death. Were it not that I dread God, I would cleave thee in two parts ; for I delivered thee from hanging, and now thou hast slain my daughter, but of me thou shalt have no harm, therefore go thy way, for if I find thee here again, thou shalt die a cruel death. Then the

woeful emprefs put on her clothes, and rode alone, and as she rode, she met a man going to be hanged; wherefore she prayed them that she might redeem that misdoer. So the emprefs paid his ransom, and he was delivered. And she swore him to be true to her. Then they came nigh a city, and the emprefs said, go before me, and take up for us a lodging. When the men of the city perceived her beauty, they craved of her unlawful love; but all was in vain.

It fortun'd after, that there arriv'd a ship full of merchandise at that city. When the lady heard this, she bade her servant go and see if there were any cloth there for her use. Her servant prayed the master to come and speak with his lady: the master of the ship saluted the lady courteously; and she received him according to his degree, and bargained with him for some cloth, and when the servant went for the cloth, the master said to the lady's servant, I love your lady more than I can tell, and I would give for love of her, all that I have; so go home to thy lady, and tell that I will not deliver the cloth, except she come herself; and do thou bring her to my ship.

So he went again to the lady, and told her, that the master would not deliver him the cloth, except she came herself. So the lady went to the ship, and when the master saw the wind was good, he sail'd forth. When the lady perceived this, she said, what hast thou done to me? the master said, madam, I must needs lie with thee, and afterwards espouse thee. O sir, quoth she, I will never do such a thing but with him to whom I am bound by the law. But, quoth he, if you will not grant it me, I will cast you into the sea. If it be so, quoth she, I pray thee to prepare a private place, where I may say my prayers unto the Father of heaven to have mercy on me.

The master gave her his cabin wherein she kneeled down and said her prayers. When she ended there

arose a great tempest in the sea, so that the ship burst to pieces, and all perished, save the lady; and she caught a cable and saved herself, and the master caught a board of the ship and saved himself: nevertheless they were drove on a diverse coast. The lady landed in her own empire near a city, where she lived so holy a life, that it pleased God to give her power to heal diseases; wherefore her fame was spread thro' many regions.

At that time the emperor's brother (that hanged her by the hair) was smitten with a leprosy. The steward that slew the earl's daughter, was blind, deaf, and had the palsy: the thief that betrayed her was lame. And the master of the ship was distracted.

When the emperor heard of that holy woman, he said to his brother, Let us go to this holy woman that she may heal thee. When the citizens heard of his coming, they received him honourably: then the emperor enquired of any such a woman was among them that could heal sick folks. Now at the same time was come the knight that slew the earl's daughter, and the thief, and the master of the ship, all to be healed: then the empress muffled her face, that the emperor should not know her. None of all these knew her; but she knew them well: then said she, My lord, I cannot heal your brother nor none of these, except they acknowledge what great evil they have done: then the emperor said, Brother, acknowledge open'ly thy sins, that thou mayest be healed of thy sickness: then he began to tell how he led his life; but he told not that he hanged the empress——But, replied she, it is in vain, he hath not made a full confession: the emperor hearing this, said, Acknowledge thy sin truly, or else avoid my company for ever. Ah! my lord, quoth he, I may not tell my sin openly, except I be sure of my pardon; then the emperor commanded him to tell wherein he had offended, and he should be forgiven.

Then he told how he had desired of the empress to commit adultery with her; and because she denied him, he hanged her up by the hair in the forest.

Then the emperor, in a rage said, O thou wretch! were it not that I have pardoned thee, thou shouldest die a most shameful death. Then said the knight that slew the earl's daughter, My lord found on a time a Lady hanging in the forest, and brought her home and gave her his daughter to keep, and when she would not consent to lye with me, I slew the earl's daughter that slept with her; and put the bloody knife in her hand. Then said the thief, Seven officers were leading me to the gallows, and such a lady bought me off, and afterward I betrayed her to the master of a ship. Such a lady, quoth the master of the ship, received I, and would have lien with her, but there arose such a tempest, that the ship burst all in pieces, and all therein were drowned save she and I.—Then said the empress, Ye do now truly confess the truth, wherefore I will now apply my medicine, and they all received their healths. Then she uncovered her face to the emperor, and he knew her, and embraced her, and kissed her; saying, Blessed be God, now I have found that I desired. And he led her home with great joy; and after that, when it pleased God, they ended both their lives in peace.

The M O R A L.

This emperor betokeneth Christ; The empress betokeneth a holy soul; This brother betokens the flesh, who provoketh the soul to sin: but the soul that loveth God, withstandeth that temptation, and imprisoneth the flesh in the prison of repentance, and at last the soul letteth him out of the prison of repentance, and arrayeth him with virtues, and so rideth forth to meet our Lord with thanksgiving. The deer, that is, the lust of the flesh, ariseth, and the hounds runneth after her, that is evil thoughts, so that the body and

the soul is left alone, and then the flesh dispoileth her of her clothing; that is, of her virtues, and hangeth her up by the hair, that is on delights; till the good earl cometh; that is a discreet preacher; then he leadeth her to the church, to nourish his daughter, who is conscience. The earl had in his chamber a lamp; so every preacher should have before him the lamp of holy Scripture. The steward is pride of life, which is steward of this life, who taketh the knife of courtesie, wherewith he slayeth the earl's daughter; that is, conscience. This lady also redeemed a man from death, that is, from everlasting death: therefore let us in all haste save our neighbour from the sink of deadly sin. But many now a days are very unkind, as was the thief which deceived the lady, after that she had saved him.

The master of the ship betokens the world: But when a man obeys the commandments of God, and forsaketh the world, then breaketh the ship. When this lady had escaped the sea, she went to a city; that is, the Soul went to a holy life, and there she healed all manner of sick folk; that is, every man that is troubled in his soul. But they could not be healed till they had confessed their sins: yet all this while was the empress unknown to her husband; that is, the church, till God led her home to the heavenly habitation of eternal glory. Unto which God bring us all. *Amen.*

The ARGUMENT.

Every magistrate and ruler is to be honoured. Every man ought to consider his duty herein. And every false Christian goes to hell; but the just shall inherit the life everlasting.

The Forty-first History.

IN Rome dwelt an emperor named Martin, which kept his brother's son, called Fulgentius; but a knight that was steward and uncle to the emperor, en-

vied Fulgentius, studying daily how he might bring him to trouble. Wherefore the steward said to the emperor, My dear lord, Fulgentius hath defamed you saying, that your breath stinks, and that it is death to him to serve you your cup. Then the emperor was displeased, and said, Tell me if my breath stinketh? My lord, quoth the Steward, I never perceived a sweeter breath. But, says he, ye shall understand the truth, for to-morrow when he serveth you of your cup, he will turn away his face from you: and this is most certain proof. Therefore, when the Steward heard this, he said to Fulgentius, Dear friend, I will tell you a fault whereof the emperor complaineth oft, and thinketh to put thee from him: then said Fulgentius, Good sir, tell me why my lord is fore moved with me, and I am ready to amend my fault: thy breath, quoth the steward, stinketh so fore that his drink doth him no good: then said Fulgentius, truly, that I never perceived: but what think you of my breath? Truly, quoth the steward, it stinketh very foul. But I warn thee, when thou servest my lord of his cup, that thou turn thy face away from him, so that he may not smell thy breath: then Fulgentius promised to do by his counsel. Not long after, Fulgentius served his Lord as he was wont and turned his face from the emperor, as the steward desired him. Which when the emperor perceived, he smote Fulgentius on the breast with his foot, and said, O thou varlet, now I see it is true that I have heard, and therefore go out of my sight. And Fulgentius weeped fore, and went out of his sight. And the emperor called his steward, and said, How may I rid the world of this varlet? My lord, quoth the steward, within three miles ye have brick makers, which daily make great fires, and also they burn lime; therefore send to them this night, and charge them, that whosoever cometh to them first in the morning, saying to them, My lord commandeth them to fulfil

his will : that they cast him into the furnace and burn him : and command you Fulgentius to go early in the morning, and ask them whether they have fulfilled your will ? And they shall cast him into the fire. Quoth the emperor, Call to me the varlet Fulgentius, And he said to him, I charge thee rise early in the morning, and go to the burners of lime and brick, and charge them that they fulfil my commandment, or else they shall die. Now the emperor had sent messengers to his brick makers, commanding them upon pain of death, that whosoever should come to them first in the morning, saying, as is before rehearsed, they must cast him into the fire, and burn him. Early in the morning Fulgentius arose, and prepared himself towards his way ; and as he went he heard divine service : and at the end fell asleep, so soundly, that none could awaken him. The steward desiring to hear of his death, about two o'clock went unto the workmen, and said, have ye done the emperor's command ? The Brickmakers answered, No, but it shall be done, and with that they laid hands on him : then cried the steward, Save my life, for the emperor commanded that Fulgentius should be put to death : then said they, the messenger told us, that whosoever came first to us in the morning, saying as you have said, that we should cast him into the fire, and burn him into ashes : and then they threw him into the fire. And when he was burnt, Fulgentius came and said, Have you done the emperor's commands ? Yea, said they. We had in command, upon pain of death, that whosoever came first in the morning, and said as thou hast said, that we should cast him into the furnace ; but before thee came the steward, and now he is burnt to the bones.

When Fulgentius heard this, he thanked God for preserving him ; and went to the Palace. When the Emperor saw him, he said, hast thou been with the brickmakers ? Soothly my lord, I have been there : but

ere I came your commandment was fulfilled, for the steward came before me, and they threw him into the furnace: Then said the Emperor, that death I ordained for thee thro' counsel of the steward, because thou didst defame me, saying, that my breath did stink grievously, and thou turnedst away thy face when thou servedst me of my cup; and for this cause I ordained thee to die that cruel death.

Then answered Fulgentius, Please to hear me: the steward that is now dead, came to me, and said, that ye told unto him that my breath did stink, and thereupon counselled me to turn away my face. When the emperor heard this, he said, now I see the judgment of God, the steward is burnt, and his own wickedness is fallen on himself; and therefore thou art much bound to Almighty God, that hath preserved thee from death.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor betokeneth every magistrate; and Fulgentius betokeneth every Christian; which should serve them with loyalty, as Fulgentius served the emperor at his cup: this steward betokeneth every false Christian, which turneth the heart of wise men from God, saying, that his breath stinketh; that is, that his life is not acceptable to God. But such malicious People shall be cast into the everlasting fire of hell, from which deliver us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The A R G U M E N T.

Ungodly persons walk without knowledge of the truth. The wicked persecute the godly; but they are preserved by God, so ought not to sleep in sin. A figurative speech of three meanings, viz, Take, Yield, and Flee, The signification thereof.

The Forty-second History.

THere dwelt in Rome, an emperor, named Dalphinus, which had an only daughter. As this

emperor was hunting in the forest, he lost his way, till at last when he had ridden all the day alone, in the evening he saw a house, and knocked at the gate; immediately the good man asked what he would have? Quoth the emperor, I desire of you lodging for the love of God. The good-man answered, I am the emperor's forester, and have plenty of venison, and victuals for you; but he knew not that he was the emperor. Then the forester received him kindly, and when he had supped he brought him to his chamber, and he went to bed. In the same night the forester's wife was delivered of a son. And as the emperor was sleeping, he heard a voice, saying thrice, Take, Take, Take. And then he awoke, and marvelled greatly. And the second time he heard a voice saying, Yield, Yield, Yield. And he awakened again, and wondered, saying unto himself, what may this signify? What should I yield? And he fell asleep again, and heard the third voice, saying, Flee, Flee, Flee; for this night is a child born that after thy decease shall be emperor. In the morrow the emperor said to the forester, tell me if any child be born here this night? My wife quoth the forester, this night is delivered of a son. I pray thee, said the emperor, show me thy son; and he saw a mark in the child's visage, whereby he might know him at another time; and he said to the forester, I am the emperor your lord, whom ye have lodged; and I give the hearty thanks. The forester fell down on his knees, and besought him of mercy, if he had offended him in any thing. Then answered the emperor, Be not afraid: I must have thy new born son to bring up in my court. Then the emperor rode home to his palace: and called unto him such servants as he trusted best, and said, Go ye unto my forester, and receive from him his son, of which his wife was delivered last night; and on pain of death I command you to slay him by the way, and cast his flesh to the dogs.

but bring you the heart to me : then the servants went and received the child ; and when they came near the palace, one of them that was most merciful, said, If we murder this innocent child, we shall offend God ; here are young pigs, kill we one of them, and take his heart and say to the emperor, there is the heart of the young child ; and let us lay him in some hollow tree, peradventure God will save his life. So they killed a pig, and carried the heart to the emperor ; saying, Lo, we have destroyed the child, as ye commanded us ; and they shewed him the pig's heart : The emperor cast it into the fire, saying, There is the heart of him which should have been emperor after me.

The same day after the child was put into the hollow tree, an earl hunted in the forest, and his hounds came to the tree, and when they smelt the child they would go no farther : the earl seeing this, looked in, and saw the child lying, and took it up in his arms, and bear it home to his castle ; saying unto his wife, I have found a fair child in an hollow tree, as I hunted in the forest ; and because thou hast no child, therefore feign thyself with child and say it is thine. So news went thro' the country that the countess was delivered of a son.

When the child was fifteen years old, the emperor made a solemn feast, unto which this earl was called who brought his son with him, and he carved at the board before the earl. The emperor espied the token in his forehead, wherewith he was greatly moved, and said unto the earl, Whose son is this ? said the earl, He is my son. But, said the emperor, by the faith thou owest to me, tell me truth. The earl told him he found him in a hollow tree ; the emperor was distracted for anger, and called his servants, whom he had employed to destroy the child, and examined them. Gracious lord, said they, pity so moved us, that we put him in the hollow of a tree ; and in his stead we killed a pig, and brought the heart thereof to

you. Then the emperor said unto the earl, this young man must abide with me. And at that time the empress and her daughter sojourned in another country; and the emperor said unto this young squire, It behoveth thee to ride unto the empress with my letters: the intent whereof was, that she should take the bearer, and draw him at a horse tail, till he were dead. When the letters were all sealed, the emperor commanded him to speed on his journey; then the squire put them in a box, and rode forth. When he had rode three days, he came into a castle, where dwelt a knight, and he desired lodging: the king made him good cheer, and brought him into his chamber, and he immediately fell asleep being weary, and forgot his box lying open. When the knight saw the box, he opened the letters, and read how the empress should put the bearer of them to death; and he was sorrowful, and said, Alas, it is a pity to slay so good a man! and he razed out the writing, and wrote these words, "I command thee, that thou take this squire, and marry him unto my daughter; and use him as if he were your own son." Then the knight put the letters into the box again. Early in the morning the young squire rode forth on his journey; and the third day he came to the empress, and gave her the letters. When the empress had read them, she sent forth her messengers, commanding the nobles to come to her daughter's wedding.

When the day was come, the young squire espoused the emperor's daughter with great honour. Not long after, the emperor came unto the country, and when the empress heard of his coming, she took her son-in-law, and went to meet him. When the emperor saw this young squire, he said, O thou cursed woman! because thou hast not fulfilled my commandment, thou shalt die an evil death: for I wrote to thee to put him to death, and yet he is alive. My lord, quoth the empress, you wrote to me that I should give him our

daughter to wife; and here are your own letters. When the emperor saw this, he said, O Lord Jesus, it is folly to strive against thine ordinance: thy will be done. And with that he took his son-in-law in his arms, and kissed him; who after his death was emperor, and ended his life in rest and peace.

The MORAL.

This emperor may betoken Herod who would have slain the child Jesus, therefore he sent messengers to seek him, that he might come and worship him. The forester betokeneth Joseph, who kept him: but when the three kings came, they worshipped him, and left him in the hollow tree of the Godhead. The earl that found him betokeneth the Holy Ghost, which warned Joseph to flee into Egypt.

By the first *Take*, may be understood, the great benefit that he gave thee, when he gave thee a soul made to his own similitude; by the second *Take*, is understood the Son of God; by the third *Take*, is understood his death upon the cross. By the first *Yield*, is understood, that we ought to yield our souls unto God; by the second *Yield*, that we ought to yield honour to God and man; by the third *Yield*, that we ought to yield to God, true faith, contrition and amendment. The first *Flee*, betokeneth sin, which we should flee: the second *Flee*, betokeneth the world, which we should flee; the third *Flee*, betokeneth everlasting pain, which we ought to flee, to everlasting bliss. Unto which bring us, Lord Jesus. Amen.

The ARGUMENT.

The soul of man, ravished by sin, complaineth unto Christ. The tyrant is overcome by Christ, who espouseth her unto him. Christ receiveth patient sinners to his mercy.

The Forty-third History.

IN Rome dwelt an emperor named Sontasinus, who ordained, that whosoever ravished a virgin should die: and if she were rescued, he that rescued her should have her to wife; and if he would not marry

her, she should be espoused by his appointment. It befel, that a tyrant named Pontcanus, led a virgin into a forest, and deflowered her, and he would have slain her; and as he was despoiling her of her clothes, there came a knight, which heard the damsel, and rode to see what it might be: but when he came, he saw a woman naked, save her smock; to whom the knight spake, Art thou she that cried so lamentably? Then answered she, This man hath ravished me, and now he would slay me; for the love of God help me. Then said the tyrant, She is my wife, and I have found her in adultery; therefore I will slay her: then said the knight, I believe her rather than thee: therefore will I fight with thee for her deliverance. And immediately they fought, till they were both wounded. Nevertheless, the knight put the tyrant to flight.— Then said the knight to the woman, Now have I saved thee from death, wilt thou be my wife? quoth she, With all my heart: then said the knight, Here beside is my castle; abide there till I have provided all things for our wedding. Then went she unto his castle; and the knight went unto his friends to bid them to the marriage. In the interim, came Pontcanus, the tyrant, to the castle, and prayed to speak with her; and this tyrant subtilly flattered her, and said, If it please you to consent to me, I shall give you great riches; and I shall be your servant. And the woman was deceived thro' his flattering, and took him to her in the castle. Not long after, the knight came, and found the gate shut, and knocked, but long it was ere he had an answer. At the last the woman came, and demanded why he knocked? then said he, Why hast thou changed thy love. Let me come in? Nay, said she, thou shalt not come here; for I have here my love which I loved before. Remember, says he, thou gavest me thy truth to be my wife; and behold my wounds which I have suffered for thy love. And so

he unclothed himself, and showed her his wounds : but she shut fast the gate, and went her way. Then when the knight saw this, he went to the judge, and made his complaint to him, praying him to give right and wise judgment to the tyrant and this debauched woman.—Then the judge gave orders that they should both appear before him, at a certain time which he appointed, and when they made their appearance the knight spoke as follows : My lord, I ask the benefit of the law : which is this, ‘ If a man rescue a woman ‘ from ravishing, the rescuer can marry her, if he ‘ pleaseth.’ And this woman I delivered from the hands of that bloody tyrant, who was just going to destroy her ; and therefore I ought to have her to my wife : and further, she gave me her faith and truth to marry with me ; and thereupon she went to my castle, and I have been at an exceeding great cost concerning our wedding, and therefore as far as my judgment can carry me, she is my wife by the law.

Then said the impartial judge to this wicked tyrant, thou knowest well that this knight delivered her from thy hand ; and for her love, hath suffered grievous wounds, and therefore well thou knowest that she is his wife by our law, if he pleaseth. But after her deliverance, with a flattering tongue, thou hast deceived her ; what can you say in your defence ? therefore I adjudge thee to be hanged.

Then said the judge to the woman in like manner, O thou vilest of women ! thou knowest how this man saved thee from death ; and thereupon thou betrothedst him thy faith and thy truth to be his wife ; therefore by two reasons thou art his wife ; First by the law, and after by faith and truth. This notwithstanding, thou consented afterwards to the tyrant, and broughtest him into the knight’s castle, and didst shut the gate against the knight, and wouldst not see his wounds, who suffered so much for thy love ; and

and therefore I judge thee to be hanged also. And so it was done; both the ravisher, and she that was ravished, were condemned to death. Wherefore every man praised the judge for his wise judgment.

The M O R A L.

This emperor betokeneth the Father of heaven, which ordained a law, that if the soul of man were ravished from God by sin, the savor of the soul should espouse him, if it pleased. The woman that was ravished, betokens the soul of man, which was ravished by the sin of our fore-father, Adam: and let out of paradise into the forest of this wretched world by the tyrant Pontcanus, which betokeneth the Devil: and he not only defiled her by losing the heritage of heaven; but also he would slay her with everlasting pain. But the soul crieth with an high voice, whose cry our Lord Jesus Christ heard. This cry was made when Adam cried after the oil of mercy; and patriarchs and prophets cried for remedy, in these words: O thou, the highest in heaven, visit thou us, &c. The knight betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, which came from heaven, and fought with the tyrant; that is, the devil, and they were both sore wounded; for our Lord Jesus Christ was wounded in the flesh, and the devil maimed in his kingdom; wherefore the woman, that is the soul gave her faith and truth unto Christ Jesus, when she became a Christian, saying these words; I forsake the devil and his pride, and believe in God the Father Almighty. Then ordained our Lord Jesus Christ, a marriage between him and her, with the two special sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, whereof may be made a strong castle against the devil. Also our Lord commanded the soul to keep herself still in the castle of virtue, till he went to provide that was needful; that is, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven to prepare for her a dwelling place of everlasting joy; where we should dwell after the day of judgment with our Lord God in honour and glory.

But alas ! in the mean time come the devil, and beguiled the wretched soul by deadly sin, and so he entered into the castle of our heart, which should be the castle of God. The knight our Lord Jesus Christ, knocked at the gate of our heart, according to the scripture, thus, Lo, I stand at the door and knock, if any man will open, that I may enter. But where the devil is, God doth not enter, except the sinner will receive him by repentance, which seeing our blessed Lord hanging on the cross, that we may see his bloody wounds which he suffered for us, we sinners should be the rather mindful of his love : for from the crown of his blessed head unto the sole of his feet, was left no whole place : therefore saith the prophet Isaiah, Behold, and see if any sorrow be like to my sorrow, therefore he is a wretched man that will not be converted unto his Lord God, but lie still in deadly sin, wherefore when he is called before the high Judge, he shall be condemned to everlasting death. Therefore study we to open the door of our hearts by fruitful faith in Almighty God, and without doubt we shall obtain everlasting life. Unto which bring us Lord Jesus. *Amen.*

The ARGUMENT.

The body and soul of man being made by God's grace the temple of the Holy Ghost, do give themselves to serve and please God in this life, and to love God and his neighbours, according to his laws ; and tho' the body of death, suffer mortal affliction for a time, yet by faith, hope and charity, in Jesus Christ, both they shall inherit life and joy everlasting.

The Forty-fourth History.

A Certain Roman Emperor erected for himself a tomb ; as the labourers were digging, they found a coffin of gold bound with three hoops, with these words engraven, I have spent ; I have given ; I have kept ; I have had ; I now have ; I have lost ; I am punished. That which I had, I spent ; that which I gave, I have. The emperor called his nobles, and said, consider what this inscription meaneth. They said,

the meaning is this. There was a certain emperor, which desired to leave behind him a good example. I have spent my life in judging righteously. I have given to the poor maintenance, and to every one according to their deserts. I have kept righteousness and mercy. I have had a liberal heart to every one which served me. I have given riches and favour at all times. I have had a hand to subdue enemies, protect friends and punish offenders. I have lost the friendship of enemies and lasciviousness of the flesh. I am punished now because I believed not in one God eternal. I am punished, because I cannot redeem myself, but by the merits of Christ. When the emperor heard the meaning wisely interpreted, he governed more providently, and ended his life with much honour.

The M O R A L.

Dear friends, this emperor is every good Christian, which ought to erect a tomb, that is, his heart prepared unto God: and so diggeth in the ground of his heart, by repentance, that he finds a golden coffin; that is, a body dead to sin, and bound about with three hoops, viz. faith, hope and charity. What was engraven is, First, I have spent. What? The good Christian answereth, My body and soul in the service of God. The second inscription, I have kept, What? The good Christian answereth, A contrite and humble spirit. The third inscription, I have given, What? The good Christian answereth, Love unto God and my neighbour. The fourth inscription is, I have had, What hast thou had? The good Christian answereth, A wretched life, because I was conceived in sin, and was formed of vile and base matter. Fifthly, What is the inscription, I now have? The good Christian answereth, My baptism, and thereby am the soldier of Christ, whereas before I was the slave of Satan. Sixthly, What is the inscription, I have lost? To this answereth the good Christian, by my sins, yet all the sins which I have committed, I have by repentance amended: for Christ's merits cleanse us especially from all sin. Seventhly, What is the inscription; I am punished? The good Christian saith, because I am afflicted for the sins of my life. Eighthly, What is the inscription, I have spent that which I had? To this answereth the good Christian, saying, I have bestowed my life in works of mercy, by the grace of Jesus Christ. Ninthly, What is this inscription, That which I have I gave? Surely in my life, I gave my counsel, assent and will, to be the servant of God; and now it is the pleasure of God, that I shall remain with him, in the joys of everlasting life in heaven, Unto the which, Jesus Christ our Saviour bring us all. Amen.

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